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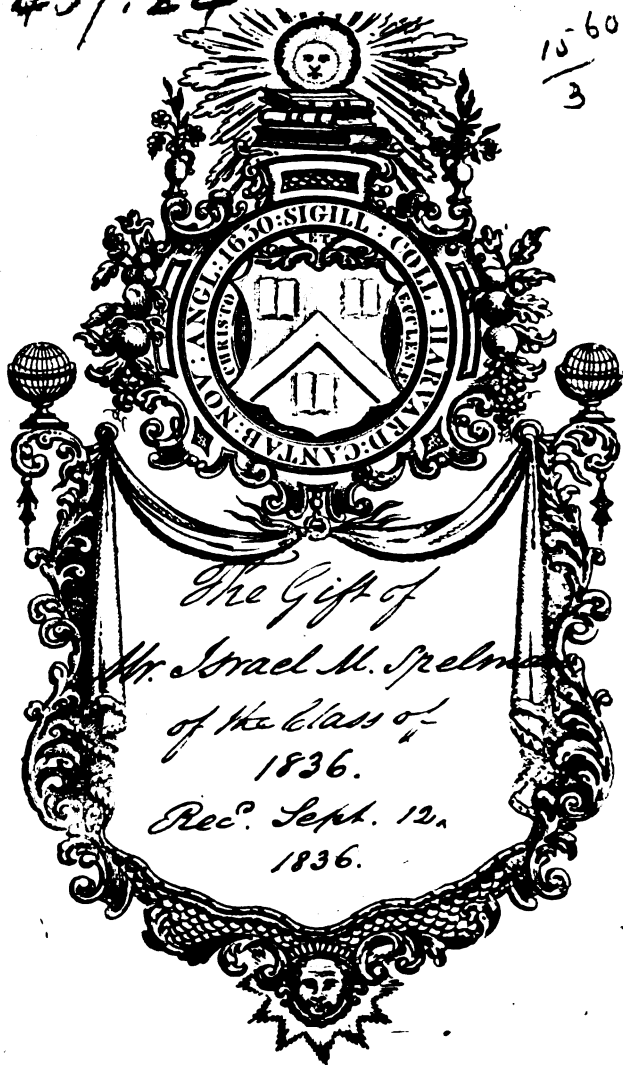
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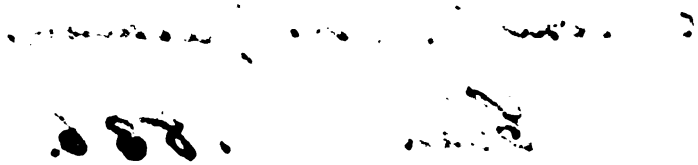




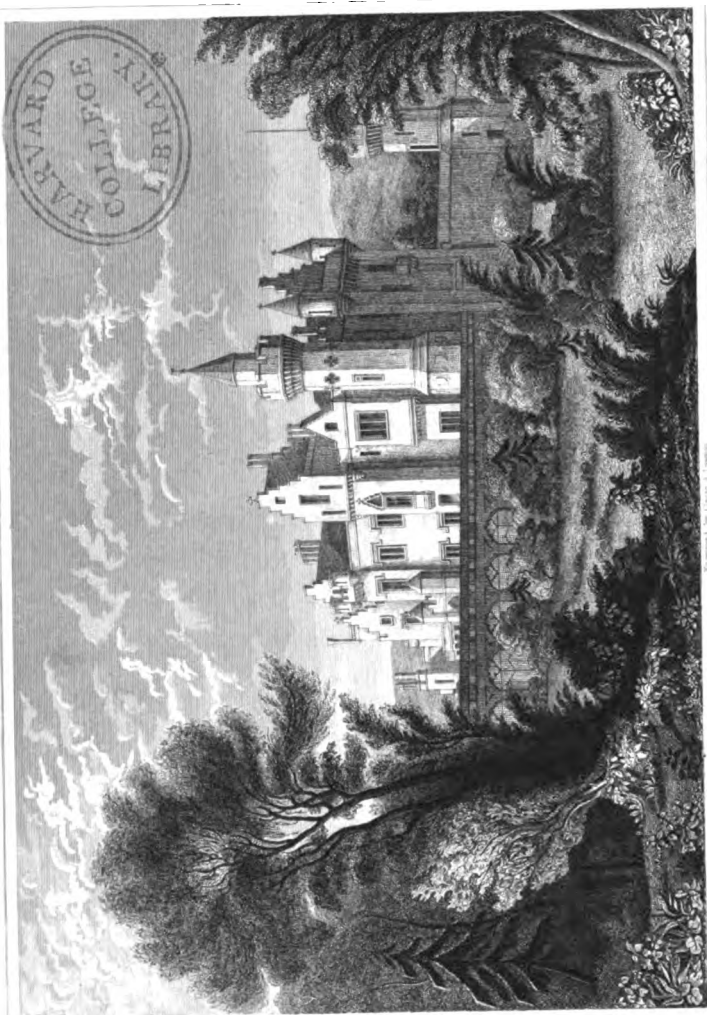


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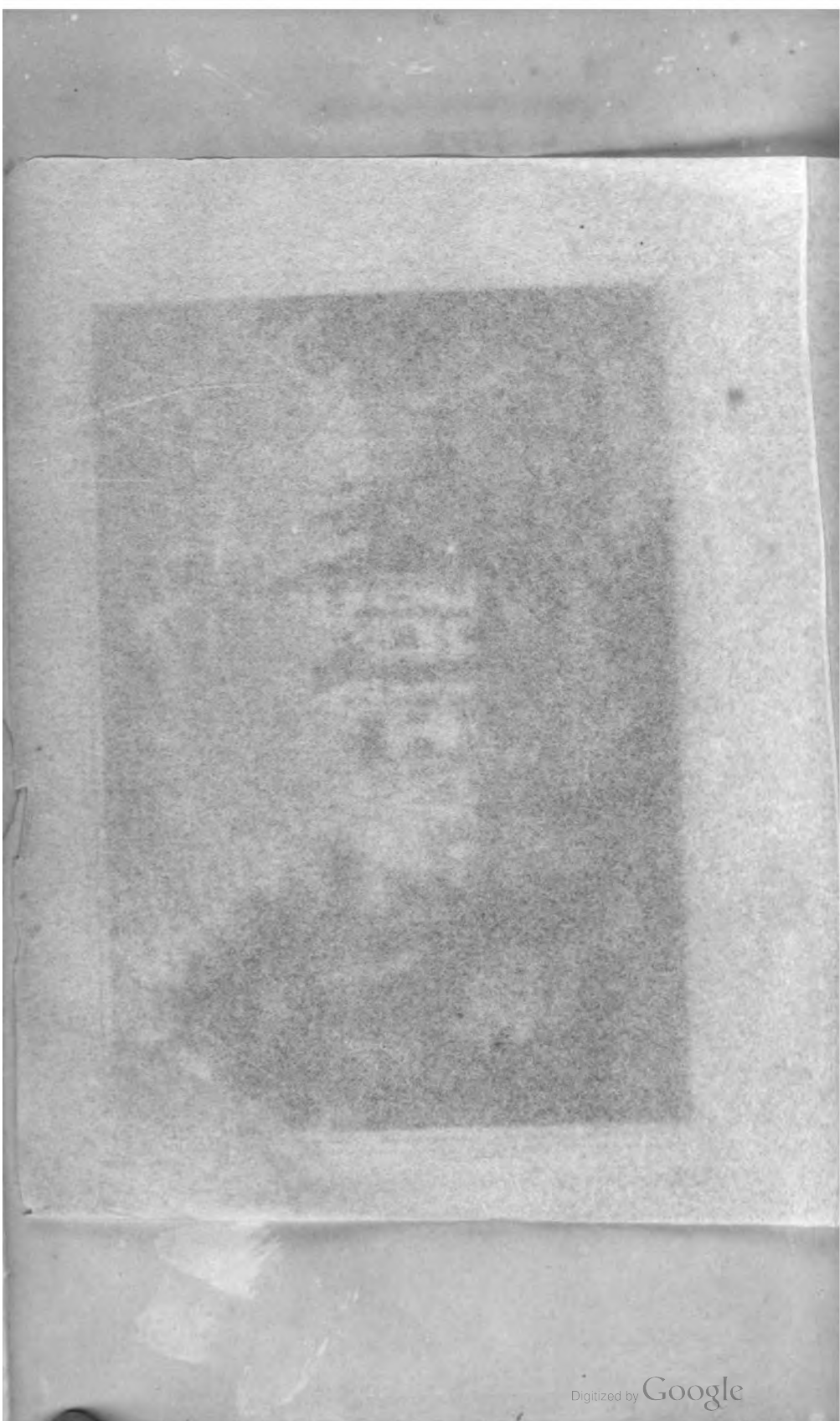
**LIFE**

THE LIFE OF

JOHN F. KELLY

BY J. F. KELLY

**1835.**



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**LIFE**

**OF**

**SIR WALTER SCOTT,**

**WITH**

**CRITICAL NOTICES OF HIS WRITINGS.**

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**BY GEORGE ALLAN, Esq.**

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**PHILADELPHIA:**

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# ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

AMERICAN EDITION.

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**THE** following authentic and valuable biography of Sir Walter Scott is the first extended sketch of the life of the author of the Waverley novels which has appeared. It has been received in England and Scotland with distinguished favour; its accuracy and impartiality have elicited warm approbation from all parties; and its perusal will, it is hoped, gratify the numerous admirers of Sir Walter in this country. No expense has been spared on the volume, to the embellishment of which the publishers have enlisted the talents of Mr. Oscar Lawson, a young artist of great merit. The engraving of Abbotsford is offered as a specimen of the arts in this country.





# LIFE

OF

## SIR WALTER SCOTT.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### INFANCY AND BOYHOOD. 1771—1785.

IN tracing the growth and formation of a mind like Scott's, no characteristic or influential incident ought to be omitted, however trifling it might seem if standing alone. The faculties which first develop themselves in the child, are the receptive and imitative. It is not before the years of mature manhood that the human being asserts an individual character. The workings of infant thought are left in a great measure to be inferred from the persons and scenes which surround the child, from the degree of quickness of apprehension and of reflection that it shows, and from its pretty mimicry of the serious actions of man. The evanescent feelings of that early age retain no place in the memory, and those of observant bystanders are too remote to enter into or appreciate them. These observations are thrown out, in the hope that they may obviate any censure likely to be passed upon the following narrative, on the score of its being at times minute and trifling. They will at least explain to the reader why we have sought to preserve as many traits as possible of the relatives who surrounded the boyhood of the poet.

Walter Scott, the father of the poet, was born in 1729. It does not appear that his father, although an enterprising agriculturist, was a wealthy man, and his family was numerous. It is true that the old man was connected with opulent and influential families, but we have been unable to ascertain that they extended the hand of patronage to his sons at their outset in life. Walter, however, (and this character he seems to have shared with his brothers,) was of an unimaginative,

clear-sighted, persevering disposition. Having passed Writer to the Signet in the year 1755, he managed, with or without the aid of patrons, to draw to himself a large share of professional business, and to accumulate a handsome fortune. At the period when the son who was afterwards to illustrate his name was born to him, he was a personable man on the wrong side of forty, frugal and methodical in his habits, a rigid disciplinarian in his family, strict and sharp in matters of business. In his political sentiments he was a whig, such as whigs then were—jealous of the superior pretensions of the aristocracy, afraid even of the memory (for it was then nothing more) of the turbulent spirit of the Jacobites, attached to the existing order of things for the sake of quiet. In his religious sentiments—and he was somewhat ostentatious in professing them—he was a strict Calvinistic Presbyterian. He was withal an honest man, and fond of a sly quiet joke.

The wife of this gentleman to whom he must have been married some time between the years 1760 and 1768, for the precise date has not been ascertained, was Anne Rutherford. Her father, Dr. John Rutherford, was one of the four scholars of Boerhaave who founded the medical school of Edinburgh, and a physican in extensive practice. Her mother was a daughter of Swinton of Swinton, the representative of one of the oldest families in Berwickshire.

Mrs. Scott was of small stature and plain features, and up to the birth of her first child extremely delicate in her health. Her father took great pains with her education, placing her at a school for young ladies, attended by many of the female nobility and gentry of Scotland. Respecting Mrs. Euphemia Sinclair, the head of this institution, Sir Walter once expressed himself to Mr. Robert Chambers thus:—"To judge by the proficiency of her scholars, although much of what is called accomplishment might then be left untaught, she must have been possessed of uncommon talents for education: for all the ladies above-mentioned" (the list includes Mrs. Scott) "had well cultivated minds, were fond of reading, wrote and spelled admirably, were well acquainted with history and with the belles lettres, without neglecting the more homely duties of the needle and accompt book; and while two of them were women of extraordinary talents, all of them were perfectly well bred in society." The ingenious gentleman who has preserved this piece of information likewise informs us:—"Sir Walter further communicated that his mother and many others of Mrs. Sinclair's pupils were sent, according to a fashion then prevalent in good society, to be *finished off* by the Honourable Mrs. Ogilvie, a lady who trained her young friends to a style of manners which would now be considered intolerably stiff. For instance, no young lady in sitting was permitted ever to touch the back of her chair. Such was the effect of this early training upon the mind of

Mrs. Scott, that even when she approached her eightieth year, she took as much care to avoid touching her chair with her back, as if she had been still under the stern eye of Mrs. Ogilvie."

A mind naturally active, and awakened by careful tuition, must have been still farther stimulated by the company which assembled in the house of a man who held so high a station in the scientific world of Edinburgh as her father. According to the testimony of Sir Walter, Mrs. Scott was fond of poetry; and all her surviving friends agree to represent her as a person of much shrewdness, possessed of a large fund of anecdote. In the language of an humble friend, intelligent beyond his opportunities, who was long one of the principal agents of her charities,—“She, like her husband, was strictly pious, and while able to attend divine service sat with her servant in the West Church. She was much in the habit of reading books of devotion, and of causing them to be read to her. She was in her household economy most frugal, yet without meanness; and in her charities she was unbounded. She had many pensioners: paying the rent of some, allowing others a weekly stipend, with a present of clothes and coals at the beginning of winter. Her maids were often out on errands of mercy.”

There was little of romance in the union of two such characters. The lady, of whom a confidante relates that although blessed with a large family of children, (their number was at least ten,) she still wished for more, found in all probability that in the eyes of the young and fashionable the plainness of her person was not compensated by the accomplishments of her mind. The steady lawyer, who had reached the time of life when “the heyday of the blood is tame,” could appreciate the value of a rational companion, and could scarcely be insensible to the advantages likely to accrue from a union with one so well connected. When two persons of different sexes have learned to regard each other in this light, a little intimacy soon produces attachment enough to be the basis of a comfortable marriage.

The fruit of this union was, as we have already intimated, a family of some ten children. Of these Sir Walter Scott, the subject of our narrative, was, according to one account, the third, while another represents him as the fourth. None of the others attained to any distinction, and with the exception of his immediately younger brother Thomas, none of them were so intertwined with the after events of his life, as to render their appearance in our story necessary. We may therefore briefly dispose of them here. Robert, the eldest born, died captain of a vessel in the East India Company's service. John, the second, who, after suffering long with bad health, died in his mother's house, rose to be major of the 78th. Anne died unmarried, of a brain fever, and another daughter was still-born. Daniel, the youngest, served in Holland

under Sir Ralph Abercromby, as a lieutenant in the 5th regiment of foot. He subsequently left the army, and commenced merchant in Leith. Having suffered severe losses, he went abroad, whence he returned in bad health, and died in his mother's house. If Mr. and Mrs. Scott had any more children, their names have not survived. Miss Scott is said to have been handsome and amiable. The brothers were remarkable for nothing in their boyhood but good health and untameable spirits. In manhood they performed with more or less ability the routine duties of their station, and dedicated their leisure hours to the pursuit of such pleasures as they were capable of enjoying. With this brief notice we leave them, to turn to the immediate subject of our narrative.

WALTER SCOTT was born on the 15th of August, 1771. According to the account given by the woman who nursed his brother Thomas, and had the charge of himself at the same time, he was "as fine sonsy a bairn as ever woman held in her arms." He had attained his twenty-second month, and could already walk tolerably well for a child of his age, when the girl was awakened by his screams one morning between one and two o'clock. She lifted him from the bed and set him on his feet, but he sunk down. On feeling his right leg it was cold as marble. Mrs. Scott was immediately alarmed, and a messenger despatched for her father, every effort of whose skill was tried in vain. This account of the origin of Scott's lameness, we are inclined to believe in preference to that which represents it as having been caused by a fall, for various reasons. The nurse, who is still alive, relates the circumstances with so much simplicity, and at the same time with such minuteness of detail, as shows how deeply the events of that night have been imprinted on her memory. The suspicion which might attach to her as interested in removing the charge of carelessness from herself, is effaced by the corroborating evidence of another female domestic then in the family, who likewise still survives. The cause of the lameness was in all probability a paralytic affection, superinduced, or at least aggravated, by a scrofulous habit of body.

Be the cause of his lameness, however, what it might, it is certain that his general health suffered severely. The "sonsy bairn" continued for upwards of two years a pining child. It was only at the end of that period that he became able to move about a little upon crutches. After recovering thus far, however, he continued slowly but steadily to gain strength, until in his fifth year he was so far recovered, that his anxious parents could venture to trust him out of their sight. He was then sent to the charge of his grandfather at Sandy Knowe, in the hope that the free life of a country boy might confirm his health.

It is impossible to say how far the scenes and persons immediately

around him might, even at this early period of life, have left lasting impressions upon his mind. He was born in a house belonging to his father, situated at the head of the College Wynd, which has since been removed to afford space to the new university buildings. The two lower flats of this tenement were occupied by another family; the third, which was accessible by a stair from behind, was the dwelling of Mr. Walter Scott. From this locality, the environs of which must then have been much more confined, and equally dingy as now, the family removed soon after Walter's birth to a new house in George Square. The infant eye was here allowed to dwell upon a less confined and more cheerful scene. The neighbouring meadows here allowed him to enjoy the fresh country air in the arms of his nurse. In all probability it is to some adventure in this neighbourhood that we owe the following passage in "*My Aunt Margaret's Mirror*,"—a circumstance strongly corroborative of a belief which we hold in common with many, that the passions stirred up in the breast of childhood long survive the images of their exciting causes, winding through human life like a stream whose source is hidden. "Every step of the way after I have passed through the green already mentioned, has for me something of an early remembrance. There is the stile at which I can recollect a cross child's maid upbraiding me with my infirmity, as she lifted me coarsely and carelessly over the flinty steps, which my brothers traversed with shout and bound. I remember the suppressed bitterness of the moment, and conscious of my own inferiority, the feeling of envy with which I regarded the easy movements and elastic steps of my more happily formed brethren. Alas! these goodly barks have all perished on life's wide ocean, and only that which seemed so little sea-worthy, as the naval phrase goes, has reached the port when the tempest is over."

The following anecdotes which refer to this period of his life, although their exact dates cannot be ascertained, (nor is that matter of much consequence,) may be considered as serving to indicate his temper and turn of mind as a child. One nursery-maid who still survives, and seems to retain a vivid recollection that he was at times too many for her, says, that "he often kept the nursery in an uproar, using his crutch upon his brothers with good effect." "The cook-maid," pursues our informant, "had angered him on one occasion, when he, to punish her, drowned a whole litter of puppies in the water-cistern." That day at dinner he refused to eat any, and the investigation naturally set on foot in consequence of such an unwonted phenomenon brought his misdeed to light. One anecdote more of infancy, and we will follow him to the country. Even when a child, he was pleased and happy in a thunder-storm. A violent tempest of this kind happening to break over the town one afternoon, shortly after Wattie began to run about on crutches, the frightened

children were collected into the nursery by their scarcely less frightened attendants. He was no where to be seen; the family became alarmed at his absence; and the domestics were despatched in all directions in search of him. No word however could be heard of Wattie, until accidentally one of the men-servants had occasion to go to the back garden, where to his surprise he found the child lying on his back, clapping his little hands at every flash of lightning, and crying "bonnie, bonnie." He was carried into the house drenched with rain, and screaming with vexation at being disturbed. It seems to us that even in these trifling incidents may be discerned traces perhaps of a slight degree of that irascibility necessarily attendant upon protracted sickness, but at the same time of a temper inclining to drollery, bold and fearless, determined to keep its own under every disadvantage, and claiming kindred with the grand and beautiful.

Sandy Knowe, the residence of his paternal grand-father, is situated near the border line of the rich arable strath of the Tweed, where the land rises towards the wild pasture-lands of the Lammermuirs. The farm-house is situated on a braehead, beneath the shelter of the rude crags on which the tower of Smailholm is built. But we have a sketch of the scene in *Marmion*.

" And feelings roused in life's first day,  
Glow in the line, and prompt the lay.  
Then rise these crags, that mountain tower,  
Which charmed my fancy's waking hour :  
Though no broad river swept along  
To claim perchance heroic song ;  
Though sighed no groves in summer gale  
To prompt of love a softer tale :  
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed  
Claimed homage from a shepherd's reed ;  
Yet was poetic impulse given,  
By the green hill and pure blue heaven.  
It was a barren scene and wild,  
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled ;  
But ever and anon between  
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green ;  
And well the lonely infant knew  
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,  
And honey-suckle loved to crawl  
Up the low crag and ruined wall.  
I deemed such nooks the sweetest shade  
The sun in all his round surveyed ;  
And still I thought that shattered tower  
The mightiest work of human power."

The master of the mansion is spoken of by his grandson, in the "Border Antiquities," in these words:—"The poet's grandfather, Mr. Robert Scott of Sandy Knowe, though both descended from and allied to several respectable Border families, was chiefly distinguished for the excellent good sense and independent spirit which enabled him to lead the way in agricultural improvement,—then a pursuit abandoned to persons of a very inferior description. His memory was long preserved in Teviotdale, and still survives as that of an active and intelligent farmer, and the father of a family all of whom were distinguished by talents, probity, and remarkable success in the pursuits which they adopted." It does not appear, however, from any thing we can learn, that the old gentleman was exempted from the usual fate of improvers, a race of men who teach others how to acquire riches, but rarely secure any portion of the glittering bait to themselves.

A story introduced into the preface to the last edition of *Guy Mannering*, gives a fine jolly idea of this land-improver of the early half of the eighteenth century. "My grandfather, while riding over Charterhouse Moor, then a very extensive common, fell suddenly among a large band of gipsies, who were carousing in a hollow of the moor, surrounded by bushes. They instantly seized on his horse's bridle with many shouts of welcome, exclaiming, (for he was well known to most of them,) that they had often dined at his expense, and he must now stay and share their good cheer. My ancestor was a little alarmed, for, like the goodman of Lochside, he had more money about his person than he had cared to risk in such society. However, being naturally a bold lively-spirited man, he entered into the humour of the thing, and sat down to the feast, which consisted of all the varieties of game, poultry, pigs, and so forth, that could be collected by a wide and indiscriminate system of plunder. The dinner was a very merry one, but my relative got a hint from some of the older gipsies to retire just when

'The mirth and fun grew fast and furious,'

and mounting his horse accordingly, he took a French leave of his entertainers." Quite in keeping with the figure which the tenant of Sandy Knowe here cuts, is a story we have heard that he and his dame made a runaway marriage. But this story rests upon the authority of one who asserts that she was servant in his house at the time of the marriage, *i. e.* previous to 1729.

His appearance in old age, the period of his life at which his grandchild knew him, is thus described:—

—"the thatched mansion's grey-haired sire;



Wise without learning, plain and good,  
 And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood :  
 Whose eye in age, quick, clear and keen,  
 Showed what in youth its glance had been ;  
 Whose doom contending parties sought,  
 Content with equity unbought."

The wife of this excellent old man was still alive at the time of young Walter's transference to Sandy Knowe, but of her, beyond this, that she was a Halyburton of Newmains, no record has been preserved. More is remembered of his "aunt Jenny," of whom a worthy cotemporary, still surviving, avers that "she did all but bear him." A lady who remembers Miss Jenny well, describes her as "clever but satirical ; a woman of great kindness of disposition, but who would not pass a flaw without having a fling at it." She is said to have possessed an immense store of ballads and legendary tales. She seems in her more advanced years to have settled down into what is commonly called "a character ;" for a lady of rank who was much attached to her, and with whom she spent much of her time, used to exclaim, "Oh ! Jenny, Jenny, you will be in print yet." Be this as it may, this delicious specimen of that dearest of God's creatures, an old maiden (or widowed and childless) aunt, devoted herself from the first to her "puir lame lad-die," with all a mother's love. She watched and cherished him, guarded him from accidents, and coddled him with little dainties ; told tales to amuse his waking hours, and sung him to sleep at nights. For a course of years she persevered in these attentions, making frequent sacrifices of her personal comforts when any prospect offered of establishing his health. And well did her nursling repay her attentions. She has not "been in print" yet ; the subject was too holy to be laid bare to the public gaze.

There were two more of the old man's grandchildren inmates of his house when Walter arrived, both of whom were younger than the stranger. One of them still remembers him as kind and attentive to them,—as "a famous play-fellow." He used to limp about, leaning on his little crutch, with the lesser imps trotting after him. His own reminiscences of this period will serve to fill up the sketch which this good lady has left imperfect :—

"For I was wayward, bold, and wild,  
 A self-will'd imp, a grandame's child ;  
 But half a plague and half a jest,  
 Was still endured, beloved, carest."

It may appear fanciful to some, but we feel thoroughly convinced

that in this situation the first germs of those imaginings to which he owed his future eminence were planted in his mind. The intensity with which he has been able to identify himself with the feelings which animate the "farmer's ha'," could never have been awakened in after life. He was a denizen of that abode of homely shrewdness and glowing comfort. Educated in a town, he might have felt the strength and humour of Dinmont's character, but he could not have entered into the depth and warmth of his affections. He knew from experience how much sterling nobility of sentiment is compatible with what appears to the finical children of the conventional circles mere rudeness. He was taught to feel the difference between true worth and refinement, and when in after life he sought for heroes to his tales, he had no prejudices to lay aside, and threw himself at once boldly into the arms of nature. The spirit of holiness too which has breathed over the rural life of Scotland settled down upon him. In a poem from which we have already made more than one extract, he describes

———— the venerable priest,  
Our frequent and familiar guest,—  
Whose life and manners well could paint  
Alike the student and the saint.

But there were more exciting forms mingling at times in the groupe. Speaking of the prototype of Meg Merrilies, he says, "When a child, and among the scenes which she frequented, I have often heard these stories, and cried piteously for poor Jean Gordon." Nay, he had occasion to see such figures with the eyes of the body as well as of the mind. "Notwithstanding the failure of Jean's issue, for which

"Weary fa' the waefu' wuddie,"

a grand-daughter survived her, whom I remember to have seen. That is, as Dr. Johnson had a shadowy recollection of Queen Anne, as a stately lady in black, adorned with diamonds, so my memory is haunted with a solemn remembrance of a woman of more than female height, dressed in a long red cloak, who commenced acquaintance by giving me an apple, but whom, nevertheless, I looked on with as much awe as the future doctor, High Church and Tory as he was doomed to be, could look upon the queen. I conceive this woman to have been Madge Gordon." Tales of that savage life which had long maintained its place amid advancing civilization, like a patch of moor in the midst of a highly cultivated country, were the marvels which circulated round the fire as young Scott clung to his grandsire's knees, and a stray specimen of the

tribe still survived to lend greater reality to the dreams which those wild stories conjured up.

The same remark holds good with regard to his aunt's thousand and one tales of border strife, and her snatches of old songs. The land around Smailholm is haunted ground. In front rise the wizard Eildon hills, behind the no less wizard tower of Learmont. Storied Melrose and Dryburgh "peep from leafy shade," and the "broom o' the Cowdenknowes," still waves on the one hand, while "Yarrow braes" and "Gala water" rise and roll on the other. The minds of children feel as intense delight in the bare apprehension of facts, as our more jaded fancies in the most wayward combinations of poetry. Nay, poetry is to them but as any other narrative: its deeper sense, the witching atmosphere that breathes about it, they cannot feel. It serves the same as prose to store their minds with images, over which, when the dormant power awakens within them, they may exercise "sovereign sway and masterdom." With what intensesness of reality then must the most lovely creations of the Scottish muse have presented themselves to young Scott,—how deeply must they have impressed themselves on his belief, and intermingled with his being, when the scene of every legend lay visible before him. There is something in this blending of fiction and truth, which, to the mind of a child, is almost equivalent to reality.

The exact duration of the boy's stay at Sandy Knowe we have not been able to ascertain. On the death of her father, the warm-hearted and indefatigable aunt Jenny took up her residence in Kelso, and thither the child of so many cares accompanied her. Miss Scott inhabited, while resident in Kelso, a small house in the east corner of the church-yard, called "the Garden," which our informant believes to have been her own property. At a short distance, and in a house which communicated by means of a back lane with Miss Jenny's, dwelt her sister, Mrs. Carle or Curll. The nieces who had resided at Smailholm accompanied their aunt to Kelso as well as Walter. The sisters spent much of their time together, and the juvenile members of Miss Jenny's establishment seem to have regarded the house of either aunt indifferently as their home. Miss Jenny mixed a good deal in the most genteel society that the place afforded, and was highly esteemed by all who knew her.

Miss Jenny's house was situated, as has already been mentioned, at a corner of the church-yard. The parish school-house was erected within the enclosure which surrounded "the holy dwelling." The increasing years and stature of her juvenile *protégés*, together with the immediate vicinity of the place of instruction, determined the good lady to send them to school. It is a strange feeling with which children first enter the precincts of the "dominie's" rule. A large room filled with

long wooden benches, crossing and re-crossing each other, is filled with children sorted into classes, each with real or pretended interest muttering to itself in half-articulated sounds the lessons it will shortly be called upon to repeat. At one end of the apartment is a man ensconced in a desk, with a band drawn up in a semicircle round him. They have all books in their hands, and he has a large black leather strap lying beside him, curiously notched at one end into long narrow "whangs." The constrained attitudes of the children, and their subdued, slightly tremulous voices, show that it is no play that is going forward. If it be winter, a clear peat fire is blazing in the grate, and the thin blue smoke goes dancing up the chimney. If it be summer, the windows are all open, and the mild air enters refreshingly through them, bearing upon its wings the smell of flowers, or the circling *boom* of the wild bee. The latch lifts with a click, and the new-comer is ushered in. Instantly all is silence, and the intense gaze of the silent imps and the strangeness of the whole scene appal the little stranger, as holding fast by his friendly conductor with one hand, and stuffing the thumb of the other into his mouth, he advances with sinking heart towards the master of the place.

The teacher to whose care Scott was intrusted, when first introduced to a school, was not of a character and appearance likely to assuage the fears of his new pupil. He still lives in the memory of Walter's surviving cousin, as "a big, queer-looking, uncouth man." Another schoolfellow describes him as "a strange uncouth-looking person, with a two-storied wig, blind of an eye, and withal the worst tempered man in Britain." "He must," concludes a friend from whom we have received this information, "he must therefore have been an awful pedagogue." The name of this unlovely specimen of the schoolmaster was not less tremendous than himself,—it was "Launcelot Whale."

Our information respecting the literary qualifications of this Ogre turned schoolmaster, (for his externals certainly qualify him to figure in a fairy tale,) is less precise than that which relates to his figure and temper. As little do we know of the progress which his pupil made in learning while under his care. Walter remained only one year at school, and during that time he was engaged in learning Latin, from which we infer that his aunt Jenny, or some other inmate of his home, must have taken upon themselves the charge of initiating him into the earlier rudiments of learning.

Such of his schoolfellows as recollect Sir Walter Scott at Whale's school, agree that he mingled little in the amusements of the rest of the boys. One gentleman, whose recollections are more precise than those of any other person we have conversed with on the subject, thus speaks of him:—"He was a studious boy, who did not associate much with his school-companions, which was ascribed to his being lame. The

path from the schoolhouse to his aunt's residence necessarily lay through the church-yard. A part of the enclosure, not occupied as burying-ground, and called 'the Knowes,' was the play-ground of the school-boys. I recollect of him passing through this noisy scene to his aunt's, heedless of the amusement of his schoolfellows. I do not remember that he was at this time particularly intimate with Mr. Ballantyne's family. I think there were three of them at school,—David, the oldest son, who went to sea, but returned in bad health and died many years ago, James and John." Of these two last mentioned gentlemen we shall have occasion to speak once and again in the course of our narrative.

Scott appears to have formed no intimacy with any of his schoolmates at Kelso. He was among them, not of them. They knew him only as a studious, quiet boy, who, so soon as the school broke up, pressed through the noisy and frolicsome throng with the aid of his crutch, seemingly unobservant of all around, and only anxious to shelter himself in the house of a maiden aunt with whom he resided. Occasionally they saw him riding about the environs of the town on a *shellie*, but they came in no closer contact with him. The habits of his aunt contributed also to keep him aloof from familiar intercourse with boys of his own age. She formed with her sister and the children a little social compact, scarcely dependant upon foreign aid for amusement. The ladies visited, and were on civil but not on intimate terms with their neighbours. There was indeed a repulsive principle at work between them and the local aristocracy, which interfered in some measure with their cordiality. The Ballantyne and other distinguished Kelso families were conscious of greater wealth, and thought the mercantile profession more genteel than the agricultural. Miss Jenny and her sister, on the other hand, though only daughters of a farmer, had good blood in their veins, and looked down with huge disdain on the upsetting pretensions of the rich shopkeepers of Kelso. By the operation of these causes was Walter Scott's familiar intercourse almost exclusively restricted to the circle of his aunts and cousins; and weak in body, and accustomed to their society, he does not seem to have entertained a desire for any other.

But his parents now began to think Walter sufficiently strong to stand the wear and tear of the High-school, and were naturally anxious that as little time should be lost as possible ere he commenced that course of education which has long been considered in Scotland a necessary preparative for entering upon any of the liberal professions. Before recalling him to Edinburgh, another experiment was to be made with his weak leg. Some medical man had recommended a trial of the Bath waters, and Miss Jenny, whose contented, home-loving disposition

would never otherwise have dreamed of such a journey, undertook to be his guide and guardian to the healing springs. The particulars of this excursion, and even its exact date, we have been unable to ascertain. Our informant however is of opinion that it happened immediately prior to his recall to the paternal mansion; and his name appears for the first time in the register of the High School in October, 1779.

He was now become a tolerably healthy boy; but his leg, which was still extremely weak and easily susceptible of fatigue, afforded matter of serious care to his parents. Aunt Jenny, in her anxiety, had always made him sleep with her, and on his return to Edinburgh the precaution was kept up of never allowing him to lie alone. We learn from Mr. Chambers, that a certain Gavin Wilson, celebrated for the manufacture of artificial legs, was consulted, but without any beneficial result. By the advice of a quack of the name of Grahame, the boy used to be laid on beds of leaves soaked or sprinkled with strong ale, but with little effect, as the reader will easily guess. Nature was more efficient than art; for although he was at first regularly carried to school in the morning, and anxiously confided while there to the protection of his younger but more robust brother Thomas, he came in time to be able to indulge in long rambles, and to take a part even in the most boisterous amusements of his playmates.

However indulgent his parents might show themselves in regard to physical weakness, in every other respect he, along with his brothers, was subjected to a most martinet system of drilling. His father, methodical in every thing, insisted upon the most punctual observance of family hours. Their food was wholesome and plentiful, but plain; and with the ascetic affectation of a certain class of citizens of the old school, any expression of preference for dainties even of the simplest nature was prohibited as a kind of crime. It was esteemed a virtue to appear ignorant of whether the food were palatable or not. One day a quantity of soot had accidentally fallen into the broth, and some wry faces were made at the black and bitter mess. "Gentlemen," said their father, eating away with the most persevering equanimity, "I eat them, and you must eat them too."

In matters of religious discipline, if possible, greater strictness was observed; as be seemed the house of one who was a confidential friend of Dr. Erskine, and an elder of his session, and who is still remembered, propped upon his gold-headed cane and wrapped in his red cloak, earnestly watching the *cairn* of eleemosynary *bawbees* heaped on the pewter plate at the door of the Greyfriars' church. The theatre was a forbidden place. It was then customary for the High School boys to desire a play once a year. Attendance on the occasion was not compulsory, but payment of the ticket was. Old Scott duly paid the 3s.

for each of his boys, but refused to permit them to enter the unholy precincts, winding up the whole transaction with the remark, "that he would rather give it to a charity sermon."

But Sunday was the day on which the unbending strictness of the elder's discipline was exhibited in all its terrors. Beyond enforcing the punctual attendance of the whole household, with the exception of one maid-servant left at home to superintend the necessary culinary operations, on divine service duly forenoon and afternoon, he took no active part in the duties of the day, although he watchfully superintended their observance. Young Walter's attention to the offices of devotion seems not to have been of an uninterrupted character. We have been told by an eye-witness that a large Newfoundland dog, belonging to the family, used frequently to come to their seat during service, and it was a grand manœuvre on the part of Walter, who seemed always on the look-out for him, to open the door and let him quietly in. Then followed, of course, a slight rustle and sly looks, if not smiles, among the youngsters, and reproving looks from the old people.

When Walter returned from Roxburghshire, there was a young probationer of the Church of Scotland of the name of Mitchell, now the venerable and respected pastor of the Presbyterian congregation at Wooler, residing in the family in the capacity of tutor. Family worship was daily performed by this gentleman in his own room, at which such members of the household as chose to attend were present. On the mornings and evenings of the sabbath, however, attendance was imperative. Immediately before evening prayer Mrs. Scott examined the whole family, at great length, on religious subjects, with the exception of her husband, who remained below. On these occasions Walter always distinguished himself by the retentiveness of his memory, and the extent of his information. Those who have experienced similar attention, on the part of a parent or other relative, to their religious instruction, will agree with us as to its beneficial operation, both on the intellect and the imagination. The restraint, the sameness may at times be irksome to the temper of youth, but the exercise afforded to the memory, and the habit engendered of watching associations, that we may be enabled to draw upon our store of knowledge at a moment's warning, invigorate the mind; while the sense of reverential awe with which the task is performed, confirmed by habit, softens and attunes the mind, and furnishes to future years one of our most solemn, elevated, and tender objects of recollection. Even after Mr. Mitchell's departure the practice was continued, recourse being had to any stray preacher or student of theology that could be laid hold of. Concomitant upon this strict sanctification of the Sabbath, and indeed guaranteeing its observance, was seclusion from the visits of friends on that day. The oldest sur-

viving servant of the family only remembers one gentleman admitted to partake of the Sunday "sheephead broth," a Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Intosh, who used occasionally to dine with the family on the Sabbath.

Whilst subjected to this family discipline, Walter was admitted to participate in the instruction afforded at the High School. He attended that seminary four seasons. From October 1779 till the commencement of the autumn vacation of 1781, he belonged to the class of Mr. Luke Fraser. From October 1781 till the commencement of the autumn vacation of 1783, he was a pupil in the class of the rector, Dr. Alexander Adam.

Mr. Luke Fraser bore the character of one of the severest flagellators even of the *old school*. He was at the same time a sound and critical scholar. He was one of those accurate and painstaking teachers who will give his scholars a complete command of the language in which he undertakes to instruct them, if any one can. Of the use to which it may be put, of the treasures which it preserves, he may have no notion, but he will make them so thoroughly acquainted with the language itself, that if their abilities lie that way they may master every purpose to which it can be turned. The course of study through which he led his pupils has been recorded by a biographer: "He first caused his scholars to get by heart Ruddiman's Rudiments, and as soon as they were thoroughly grounded in the declensions, the vocabulary of the same great grammarian was put into their hands, and a small number of words prescribed to be repeated every morning. They then read in succession the Colloquies of Corderius, four or five lives of Cornelius Nepos, and the four first books of Cæsar's Commentaries. Ere this course was perfected, the greater part of Ruddiman's Grammatica Majora, in Latin, was got by heart. Select passages from Ovid's Metamorphoses, the Bucolics, and the first Æneid of Virgil, concluded the fourth year, after which the boys were turned over to the rector." This is an exact description of the routine course of the old Scottish teacher of Latin, whose business it was to teach the boys Latin, and who never dreamed of teaching them any thing else. Under a careful master of this kind, the pupils really acquired the language, and incidentally habits of accurate observation and reflection; under our more moderate pedagogues who, along with Latin, seek to give them an insight into criticism, history, geography, &c. &c. &c., they get their heads confused by indistinct notions of every thing, and their characters ruined for life by conceit.

Adam, the earliest specimen upon record of the class of teachers to which we alluded in the last paragraph, was the very reverse of Fraser. He was mild and gentle in his deportment. He was one of those who valued language only for the information to which it gives us access. The difficult circumstances under which his early studies were conducted,



had given to his habits of thought a desultory character, and rendered his stock of knowledge fragmentary. He had caught enough of the inquisitive spirit of the age to give him a distaste at the mere practical rules of the grammarians, and to make him anxious to base the rules of grammar upon the elementary principles of language. But neither his innate strength of mind nor his acquired knowledge fitted him for such a task. In his grammar, he only succeeded in making the rules of Rudiman less concise and perspicuous, not in rendering them more scientific. It is recorded of him by the same amiable and indefatigable antiquary, to whom we are indebted for an account of Mr. Fraser's *curriculum*, that "the latter hardly ever introduced a single remark but what was intended to illustrate the *letter* of the author; whereas Dr. Adam commented at great length upon whatever occurred in the course of reading in the class, whether it related to antiquities, customs and manners, or to history. He was of so communicative a disposition, that whatever knowledge he had acquired in his private studies, he took the first opportunity of imparting to his class, paying little regard to whether it was above the comprehension of the greater number of his scholars or not. He abounded in pleasant anecdote."

A remark naturally offers itself to the mind, on reverting to the account given of Mr. Fraser's system of tuition. However well calculated to impress an accurate knowledge of Latin upon the minds of those who went through the whole of the course, it would require uncommon exertion upon the part of any one joining the class midway in its career, at once to keep pace with it in the daily exercises, and to work backward in order to obtain the same stable footing with his class-fellows. This must have been peculiarly difficult in the case of Walter Scott, who had only received instruction in Latin for a year at a provincial school, and was plunged at once into the class of this disciplinarian just as it was about to start on the third year of its course. When we further add that he was, according to the joint testimony of his mother and a favourite domestic of the old lady, who still survives, "a careless boy about his lessons," and that "no one ever knew when he got them," we will not wonder that his knowledge of Latin was never very critical or accurate. The good-natured gossiping tuition of Adam, while it touched upon one string of his mind which afterwards vibrated "eloquent music," was ill qualified to mend the matter. Young Scott was equaled by few of his associates in his acquaintance with that maze of desultory learning into which their teacher was prone to guide them, and by his own testimony, he was zealous and regular in the manufacture of the versified exercises proposed to them, but in the real business of the class he was so far deficient that he was never known to attain a higher place than the eleventh.

A very essential part of the instruction communicated at a public school, is the knack of being able to keep one's place among one's fellows. In this branch of learning Scott seems to have made more decided progress than in Latin. At the first outset of his High School career, we find him carried to school by a servant. "He was very fond of it," said our informant, which presents us with a touching picture of the weak and delicate boy nestling on a friendly breast. By degrees he began to mingle more boldly with his equals in age, but met at first with an indifferent reception. He was thrust about, and regarded as a dull boy. One of his juvenile misfortunes is still remembered. The rest of the infantry of George's Square had been amusing themselves by thrusting their heads through the rails which enclose the garden in its centre. Walter must needs repeat the operation, but his head, which seems to have been as much larger than that of ordinary children, as it eventually proved, if we may believe Allan Cunningham, smaller than that of ordinary men, stuck in the attempt, and he was kept in durance vile until a blacksmith was sent for to relieve him.

As he grew in strength his spirit assumed a firmer tone, and he learned to make aggressors keep their distance. He whose little crutch had at an earlier period kept "the nursery in an uproar," made his sturdiest assailants quail beneath the weight of his club-foot. He fought his way manfully to an equality with his class-fellows, carrying home as trophies of his thousand fights, blue eyes and bloody noses innumerable, and earning at the hands of the children's maid the dainty epithet of "a wearie laddie." One of his juvenile exploits he has himself recorded in a passage of considerable pathos. "The manning of the Cowgate Port, especially in snow-ball time, was also a choice amusement, as it offered an inaccessible station for the boys who used the missiles to the annoyance of the passengers. The gateway is now demolished, and probably most of its garrison lie as low as the fortress. To recollect that the author himself, however naturally disqualified, was one of these juvenile dread-noughts, is a sad reflection to one who cannot now step over a brook without assistance."

His most chivalrous exploit in these frays must not pass unnoticed, more particularly as he has himself deemed it worthy of a lengthened commemoration. In this adventure it will be observed that his brother Thomas, his guardian when first committed to the perils of the High School-yards, stood side by side with him. It was then that he won that ardent, active, and enduring attachment which his brother displayed towards him in after life. At the conclusion of the boyish adventure we are about to quote, Sir Walter adverts to him in words of the fondest affection:—"Of five brothers, all healthy and promising, in a degree far beyond one whose infancy was visited by personal infirmity, and

whose health after this period seemed long very precarious, I am, nevertheless, the only survivor. The best loved, and the best deserving to be loved, who had destined this event to be the foundation of a literary composition, died 'before his day,' in a distant and foreign land; and trifles assume an importance not their own, when connected with those who have been loved and lost.

"It is well known in the south, that there is little or no boxing at the Scottish schools. About forty or fifty years ago, however, a far more dangerous mode of fighting, in parties or factions, was permitted in the streets of Edinburgh, to the great disgrace of the police, and danger of the parties concerned. These parties were generally formed from the quarters of the town in which the combatants resided, those of a particular square or district fighting against those of an adjoining one. Hence it happened that the children of the higher classes were often pitted against those of the lower, each taking their side according to the residence of their friends. So far as I recollect, however, it was unmingled either with feelings of democracy or aristocracy, or indeed with malice or ill will of any kind towards the opposite party. In fact, it was only a rough mode of play. Such contests were, however, maintained with great vigour with stones, and sticks, and fisticuffs, when one party dared to charge, and the other stood their ground. Of course mischief sometimes happened, boys are said to have been killed at these *bickers*, as they were called, and serious accidents certainly took place, as many contemporaries can bear witness.

"The author's father, residing in George Square, in the southern side of Edinburgh, the boys belonging to that family, with others in the square, were arranged into a sort of company, to which a lady of distinction presented a handsome set of colours. Now, this company or regiment, as a matter of course, was engaged in weekly warfare with the boys inhabiting the Cross-causeway, Bristo street, the Potter-row,—in short, the neighbouring suburbs. These last were chiefly of the lower rank, but hardy loons, who threw stones to a hair's-breadth, and were very rugged antagonists at close quarters. The skirmish sometimes lasted for a whole evening, until one party or the other was victorious, when, if ours were successful, we drove the enemy to their quarters, and were usually chased back by the reinforcement of bigger lads who came to their assistance. If, on the contrary, we were pursued, as was often the case, into the precincts of our square, we were in our turn supported by our elder brothers, domestic servants, and similar auxiliaries.

"It followed from our frequent opposition to each other, that, though not knowing the names of our enemies, we were yet well acquainted with their appearance, and had nicknames for the most remarkable of

them. One very active and spirited boy might be considered as the principal leader in the cohort of the suburbs. He was, I suppose, thirteen or fourteen years old, finely made, tall, blue-eyed, with long fair hair, the very picture of a youthful Goth. This lad was always first in the charge, and last in the retreat—the Achilles at once and Ajax of the Cross-causeway. He was too formidable to us not to have a cognomen, and like that of a knight of old, it was taken from the most remarkable part of his dress, being a pair of old green livery breeches, which was the principal part of his clothing; for, like Pentapolin, according to Don Quixote's account, Green-Breeks, as we called him, always entered the battle with bare arms, legs, and feet.

“It fell that once upon a time when the combat was at the thickest, this plebeian champion headed a charge so rapid and furious, that all fled before him. He was several paces before his comrades, and had actually laid his hands upon the patrician standard, when one of our party, whom some misjudging friend had intrusted with a *couteau de chasse*, or hanger, inspired with a zeal for the honour of the corps, worthy of Major Sturgeon himself, struck poor Green-Breeks over the head, with strength sufficient to cut him down. When this was seen, the casualty was so far beyond what had ever taken place before, that both parties fled different ways, leaving poor Green-Breeks with his hair plentifully dabbled in blood, to the care of the watchman, who (honest man) took care not to know who had done the mischief. The bloody hanger was thrown into one of the meadow ditches, and solemn secrecy was sworn on all hands, but the remorse and terror of the actor were beyond all bounds, and his apprehensions of the most dreadful character. The wounded hero was for a few days in the Infirmary, the case being only a trifling one. But though inquiry was strongly pressed on him, no argument could make him indicate the person from whom he had received the wound, though he must have been perfectly well known to him. When he recovered, and was dismissed, the author and his brothers opened a communication with him, through the medium of a popular gingerbread baker, of whom both parties were customers, in order to tender a subsidy in the name of smart money. The sum would excite ridicule were I to name it; but sure I am that the pockets of the noted Green-Breeks never held as much money of his own. He declined the remittance, saying that he would not sell his blood; but at the same time reprobated the idea of being an informer, which he said was *claw*, i. e. base or mean. With much urgency he accepted a pound of snuff for the use of some old woman,—aunt, grandmother, or the like,—with whom he lived. We did not become friends, for the *bickers* were more agreeable to both parties than any more pacific amusement;

but we conducted them ever after under mutual assurances of the highest consideration for each other."

We take it to be another proof of his anxiety to get rid of the feeling that he was in any thing inferior to his comrades, and of the dawning of that strong unbending will which he displayed in after-life, that he was most assiduous in his attendance upon the dancing lessons given by a master of that art of the name of Wilson, who waited on the family at home. One spectator of their performances insists upon it, that Walter was the best dancer among them. Nor will our readers be astonished at this apparently strange decision, when they recollect that the *gude wives* of Scotland care less for grace, or exact observance of the measure, than the hearty good-will shown by strenuous thumping of the floor: he who goes through most hard work in a given time is with them the best dancer. Besides his lameness, Walter laboured under another disqualification; he had, as the learned in melody express it, *no ear*. Mr. Alexander Campbell, organist of an Episcopalian chapel in Edinburgh at the time we speak of, but afterwards better known as editor of "*Albyn's Anthology*," laboured, but in vain, to instruct him in music. We learn moreover from Burns' Thomson, to whom Sir Walter furnished a few songs, that he was under the necessity of furnishing the poet with a stanza of the exact rhyme suited to the air for which he wanted words, and that upon this pattern-card he modeled his verses. But this anecdote refers to a later period of his life.

While Scott was thus lounging through the routine of high school duties, and mixing with as much apparent keenness and forgetfulness of any nobler aim in the rough sports of boyhood as any of his young comrades, the attentive observer might have detected in him the growth of higher faculties. He had not altogether relinquished those recluse habits which his indisposition had superinduced upon him. Although none more forward and buoyant when once engaged in play, he often forgot to seek it, and seemed as happy in his retirement as when surrounded by his comrades. His manners, perhaps from having lived so much among females, were gentle and more refined than those of other boys. One who was originally a domestic in the family, and in after-life an humble but confidential friend, assures us that unlike his brothers, Walter was ever "regardful and polite;" and that, instead of swearing, as they were noways loth to do, the strongest expletive she remembers to have heard from him at this period (and the good lady, who is somewhat of a puritan, seems still sufficiently scandalised at it) was "*Faith!*" According to the same source of information, being more amenable to censure than his brothers, he was in the custom of receiving both their share and his own. Another feature of his character at this age, and on this point our informant is corroborated by many others, was fervent

piety. "He was a pious devoted creature," is the expression used by one authority. In corroboration, rather a characteristic story is related of the two brothers Walter and Thomas. The latter was of course, as delegated guardian, obliged to wait Walter's time when setting out for school. All our readers cannot have forgot the relish with which boys enjoy a few minutes *coshering* before "the school goes in." Thomas, a fine healthy lad, was always on the alert, and dressed in time for "the gathering." But Walter had his prayers to say, and in Thomas's estimation they were somewhat of the longest. "Dod, Wattie," the impatient youngster was one morning heard to exclaim, "canna ye come awa?" "I canna come till I have said my prayers," replied Walter. "Set your prayers to the devil, can you no pray whan you come hame to breakfast?"

Much of the time which the boy spent apart from his comrades was consumed in reading, for which he had already acquired a strong appetite. Not contented with the perusal of such books as he could procure at home, or from his friends, he scraped acquaintance with a Mr. James McCleish, who kept a book-shop opposite the Greyfriars' Church, from whom he bought and borrowed many a volume. He used to read in bed for hours in the mornings and evenings. His favourite attitude while studying, if he were up and dressed, was lying upon his back on the carpet, with all his books around him, his lame leg resting upon his left thigh, and the book he was reading laid upon the lame foot as on a reading-desk. This habit he retained at least as late as the year 1796. What the nature of his studies was at the time to which our history at present relates, we have been unable to ascertain with any degree of precision. We feel fully confident, however, that they were any thing but his school-tasks. One informant assures us somewhat disdainfully, that "he was fond of reading all kind of nonsense books." Another, however, recollects the names of "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments," and "Rollin's Ancient History." His mother encouraged this turn for books, and often invited him to read aloud to her; with which request he readily complied, but always without any alteration of his supine position. The degree to which he was engrossed by a favourite book, kindled up a feud against him in the breast of a beauty of the day, which has not yet been extinguished. The lady in question, like all others with any pretensions to good looks, expected of course homage from boys as well as men, and was exceedingly mortified to find that Walter preferred the perusal of some romance which he had got hold of to her conversation. Her caressing attempts were unavailing, and her remonstrances could only draw from him, "who would speak to you?" The *belle* was so annoyed, that, on leaving the room, she could not resist the temptation to vent her anger, by putting in her head again, and

crying "hob-goblin Wattie." The epithet sunk deep, for not many years before his death he asked her, if he were still hob-goblin Wattie? This Juno of Dun-Edin, worthy to be so called from her stately beauty and masculine strength of mind, in whom

Manet alta mente repostum  
Judicium Paridis, apretaque injuria formæ,

told him he was ten times more so than ever. And she still maintains, that "he was a fashious child from over-indulgence, sometimes humorous, but frequently very dull."

Besides the delight he took in reading, his original source of pleasure and information, the gossipre of elderly acquaintances were still open to him. The pictures of some of those living libraries of romance have been traced by himself, and are transferred to these pages, in obedience to the suggestions of the principle stated in the outset of our narrative, as important indications of what these early impressions were under which his mind received its directing bias.

First on the list deserves to stand George Constable, Esq. of Wallace Craigie, near Dundee, the original of Jonathan Oldbuck, in the *Antiquary*. In the preface to the last edition of that novel, Sir Walter states:—"An excellent temper, with a slight degree of sub-acid humour; learning, wit, and drollery, the more poignant that they were a little marked by the peculiarities of an old bachelor; a soundness of thought, rendered more forcible by an occasional quaintness of expression, were, the author conceives, the only qualities in which the creature of his imagination resembled his benevolent and excellent old friend." In the introduction to the "Two Drovers," we have an incidental sketch of the old gentleman's features superadded—"He had been present, I think, at the trial at Carlisle, and seldom mentioned the venerable judge's charge to the jury without tears,—which had a peculiar pathos, as flowing down features carrying rather a sarcastic or almost a cynical expression. This worthy gentleman's reputation for shrewd Scottish sense, knowledge of our national antiquities, and a racy humour peculiar to himself, must still be remembered. For myself, I have pride in recording, that for many years we were, in Wordsworth's language,—

'——— a pair of friends, though I was young,  
And 'George' was seventy-two.'"

The grains of truth, which it has pleased Sir Walter to separate from the delightful total of Oldbuck's character, are exhausted when we add, that he once witnessed a scene between Mr. Constable and the female

proprietor of a stage-coach, very similar to that which commences the history of the Antiquary; and that to this excellent friend he was indebted "for introducing him to Shakspeare, and other invaluable favours."

Next in importance was Mrs. Anne Murray Keith, who had been an intimate friend of his mother from the time that they attended the school of Mrs. Euphame Sinclair, and dree'd penance under the rigid discipline of Mrs. Ogilvie. In one of the introductions already quoted, Sir Walter confesses, "that the lady, termed in his narrative Mrs. Bethune Baliol, was designed to shadow out in its leading points the interesting character of a dear friend, Mrs. Murray Keith, whose death occurring shortly before, had saddened a wide circle, much attached to her, as well for her genuine virtue and amiable qualities of disposition, as for the extent of information which she possessed, and the delightful manner in which she used to communicate it. In truth the author had, on many occasions, been indebted to her vivid memory for the substratum of his Scottish fictions."

The picture of Mrs. Baliol, which we are now authorised to take for that of Mrs. Keith, is given in these words:—"A little woman, with ordinary features and an ordinary form, and hair which in youth had no decided colour, we may believe Mrs. Martha, when she said of herself that she was never remarkable for personal charms,—a modest admission, which was readily confirmed by certain old ladies, her contemporaries, who, whatever might have been the youthful advantages which they more than hinted had been formerly their own share, were now, in personal appearance, as well as in every thing else, far inferior to my accomplished friend. Mrs. Martha's features had been of a kind which might be said to wear well; their irregularity was now of little consequence, animated as they were by the vivacity of her conversation; her teeth were excellent, and her eyes, although inclining to gray, were lively, laughing, and undimmed by time. A slight shade of complexion, more brilliant than her years promised, subjected my friend, among strangers, to the suspicion of having stretched her foreign habits as far as a prudent touch of the rouge. But it was a calumny; for when telling or listening to an interesting or affecting story, I have seen her colour come and go as if it played on the cheek of eighteen.

"Her hair, whatever its former deficiencies, was now the most beautiful white that time could bleach, and was disposed with some degree of pretension, though in the simplest manner possible, so as to appear neatly smoothed under a cap of Flanders lace, of an old-fashioned, but, as I thought, of a very handsome form, which undoubtedly has a name, and I would endeavour to recur to it, if I thought it would make my description a bit more intelligible. I think I have heard her say,



these favourite caps had been her mother's, and had come in fashion with a peculiar kind of wig used by the gentlemen about the time of the battle of Ramillies. The rest of her dress was always rather costly and distinguished, especially in the evening. A silk or satin gown of some colour becoming her age, and of a form which, though complying to a certain degree with the present fashion, had always a reference to some more distant period, was garnished with triple ruffles; her shoes had diamond buckles, and were raised a little at heel, an advantage which, possessed in her youth, she alleged her size would not permit her to forego in old age. She always wore rings, bracelets, and other ornaments of value either for the materials or the workmanship; nay, perhaps, she was a little profuse in this species of display. But she wore them as subordinate matters, to which the habit of being constantly in high life rendered her indifferent; she wore them because her rank required it, and thought no more of them as articles of finery, than a gentleman, dressed for dinner, thinks of his clean linen and wellbrushed coat, the consciousness of which embarrasses the rustic beau on a Sunday."

"Now and then, however, if a gem or ornament chanced to be noticed for its beauty or singularity, the observation usually led the way to an entertaining account of the manner in which it had been acquired, or the person from whom it descended to its present possessor. On such, and similar occasions, my old friend spoke willingly, which is not uncommon, but she also, which is more rare, spoke remarkably well, and had in her little narratives concerning foreign parts, or former days, which formed an interesting part of her conversation, the singular art of dismissing all the usual protracted tautology respecting time, place, and circumstances, which is apt to settle like a mist upon the cold and languid tales of age, and, at the same time, of bringing forward, dwelling upon, and illustrating, those incidents and characters which give point and interest to the story."

For this likeness the lady evidently sat at a more advanced period of life than she could have reached when her painter was a boy; and its situation as one in a gallery of fancy portraits, renders it liable to the suspicion that some features may have been touched up. There is in it, however, much that bespeaks the genuine impress of nature, and, therefore, we leave it to the readers. *Valcat quantum.* We now turn to the poet's maternal grand-aunt, Mrs. Margaret Swinton.

This lady is thus made mention of by her nephew:—"She was our constant resource in sickness, or when we tired of noisy play, and closed around her to listen to her tales. As she might be supposed to look back to the beginning of the last century, the fund which supplied us with amusement often related to events of that period." In another

place, he says :—"This good spinster had, in her composition, a strong vein of the superstitious, and was pleased, among other fancies, to read alone in her chamber, by a taper fixed in a candlestick which she had had formed out of a human skull. One night, this strange piece of furniture acquired suddenly the power of locomotion, and, after performing some odd circles on her chimney-piece, fairly leaped on the floor, and continued to roll about the apartment. Mrs. Swinton calmly proceeded to the adjoining room for another light, and had the satisfaction to penetrate the mystery on the spot. Rats abounded in the ancient building she inhabited, and one of them had managed to ensconce itself within her favourite *memento mori*. Though thus endowed with a more than feminine share of nerve, she entertained largely that belief in supernaturals, which, in those times, was not considered as sitting ungracefully on the grave and aged of her condition."

The character of the stories with which she hushed to transient quiet the crew of juvenile imps who surrounded her, was in general such as might have been expected from a person endowed with such dispositions. The tradition upon which "The Bride of Lammermoor" is founded, and the story which forms the ground-work of "My Aunt Margaret's Mirror," were among the number. But there was one in particular, which, both on account of the impression it must have made upon the young auditor, and as throwing further light upon the formation of a character which exercised a strong influence over his thoughts, cannot properly be here passed over. We give it in his own words :—

"Aunt Margaret was, I suppose, seven or eight years old when residing in the old mansion-house of Swinton, and already displayed the firmness and sagacity which distinguished her through life. Being one of a large family, she was, owing to slight indisposition, left at home one day when the rest of the family went to church with Sir John and Lady Swinton their parents. Before leaving the little invalid, she was strictly enjoined not to go into the parlour where the elder party had breakfasted. But when she found herself alone in the upper part of the house, the spirit of her great ancestress Eve took possession of my Aunt Margaret, and forth she went to examine the parlour in question. She was struck with admiration and fear at what she saw there. A lady, 'beautiful exceedingly,' was seated by the breakfast-table, and employed in washing the dishes which had been used. Little Margaret would have had no doubt in accounting this singular vision an emanation from the angelical world, but for her employment, which she could not so easily reconcile to her ideas of angels.

"The lady, with great presence of mind, called the astonished child to her, fondled her with much kindness, and judiciously avoiding to render the necessity of secrecy too severe, she told the girl she must not

let any one, except her mother, know that she had seen her. Having allowed this escape-valve for the benefit of her curiosity, the mysterious stranger desired the little girl to look from the window of the parlour to see if her mother was returning from church. When she turned her head again, the fair vision had vanished, but by what means Miss Margaret was unable to form a conjecture.

"Long watched and eagerly waited for, the Lady Swinton at last returned from church, and her daughter lost no time in telling her extraordinary tale. 'You are a very sensible girl, Peggy,' answered her mother, 'for if you had spoken of that poor lady to any one but me, it might have cost her her life. But now I will not be afraid of trusting you with any secret, and I will show you where the poor lady lies.' In fact she introduced her to a concealed apartment, opening by a sliding panel from the parlour, and showed her the lady in the hiding-place which she inhabited."

The story of the lady has nothing to do with our present purpose, which is merely to show the strength of character which must have been possessed by a woman, who when a mere girl could be thus relied upon. The communications of a beloved relation possessed of so strong an understanding, and whose fund of anecdote was collected during the stormy period of our latest civil broils, must have sunk deep into infant minds. But even in her death, which happened while Scott was yet very young, and which he has somewhere termed "the first images of horror that the scenes of real life stamped upon my mind," she was fated to be deeply impressive. The story, as we give it, is told with some unimportant variations by more than one of Mr. Scott's surviving domestics. Mrs. Swinton, at this time about eighty years of age, resided in a house on the second floor in Charles Street, in the immediate neighbourhood of George Square; no person living in the house with her but a favourite maid-servant. The girl became deranged, but her symptoms were not of such a violent nature as to alarm her mistress. During one Sabbath afternoon, when with her friends in George Square, Mrs. Swinton chanced to mention some of her aberrations, and Mrs. Scott, alarmed at the idea of her aunt remaining alone with such a person, prevailed upon the old lady to allow her cook-maid to sleep in the house. About midnight the woman heard the outer door open; she ran thither, and found the maniac; who pushed her out and violently shut the door. The cook succeeded in forcing it open; upon which the mad woman flew at her in a state of ferocious excitement, bit her in the shoulder, and threw her down the stair. When she recovered from her stupefaction, she again assayed the door, but found it locked; and she now heard the old lady exclaiming, "Oh! Peggy, you'll no murder your mistress!" Mr. Scott's servant ran, all undressed as she was, to

her master's house and gave the alarm. The inmates, horrified by this wild story, rushed to Charles Street and forced Mrs. Swinton's door. They found the old lady mangled and bloody, lying dead on the hearth, with a gory coal-axe beside her, and the house on fire. The flames were speedily extinguished. It was now found that the depositaries of the deceased were broken open, but although every thing was misplaced, nothing was missing. The maniac was no where to be seen. It appeared afterwards, that she had taken a small tea-chest under her arm, and walked out with no covering but her chemise. She passed along the Potterow, and called to a guardian of the night, who sat half asleep in his box, "There is a fire in Charles Street!" He looked up, and fainted on beholding the ghastly and gory spectacle. She was next seen at the guard-house, in the High street, where she gave a similar alarm, but was seized and detained. The maniac was confined for life, and the cook continued dangerously ill for a long time. Such an event could not fail to lay strong hold on a young mind, and must have lent an additional importance to the memory of aunt Margaret and her stories.

Among those friends whose conversation aided to store the mind of the future poet with ideas, Alexander Stewart of Invernahyle must not be forgotten. He was a Highland gentleman of good family, and had been "out in the forty-five." To judge by some of his expressions which the author of *Waverley* has preserved, we should incline to think that he had sat for his picture in the "Pate in Peril" of Redgauntlet. His fondness for relating his "hair-breadth 'scapes," his rough, half-jocular expressions, were the same. "I was found with the mark of the beast on me in every list," were his words when speaking of the difficulty with which government was induced to grant his pardon after the insurrection had been quelled. His adventures during that turbulent period were such as did him honour. The exchange of gallantry between *Waverley* and Colonel Talbot, and the concealment of the Baron of Bradwardine, are both incidents borrowed from his life. His spirit of enterprise blazed brightly to the last, as will appear from the following anecdote, which, to judge by its date, must belong to the earliest period of Sir Walter's recollected acquaintance with him, immediately subsequent to his return from Kelso to the paternal mansion.

"Invernahyle chanced to be in Edinburgh when Paul Jones came into the Frith of Forth, and though then an old man, I saw him in arms, and heard him exult (to use his own words) in the prospect of 'drawing his claymore once more before he died.' In fact, on that memorable occasion, when the capital of Scotland was menaced by three trifling sloops or brigs, scarce fit to have sacked a fishing village, he was the only man who seemed to propose a plan of re-

sistance. He offered to the magistrates, if broadswords and dirks could be obtained, to find as many Highlanders among the lower classes, as would cut off any boat's crew that might be sent into a town, full of narrow and winding passages, in which they were like to disperse in quest of plunder. I know not if this plan was attended to; I rather think it seemed too hazardous to the constituted authorities, who might not, even at that time, desire to see arms in Highland hands. A steady and powerful west wind settled the matter, by sweeping Paul Jones and his vessels out of the Frith."

The frequent visits of young Walter at the house of his uncle, Dr. Rutherford, professor of botany in the University of Edinburgh, and eminent for his discoveries in chemistry, brought him in contact with the most distinguished scholars of the day. Concerning these visits, a sufficiently characteristic anecdote is related by Mr. Chambers—we know not upon what authority. "His thirst for reading is perhaps not described in sufficiently emphatic terms, even in his own narrative. It amounted to an enthusiasm. He was at that time very much in the house of his uncle Dr. Rutherford,\* and there, even at breakfast, he would constantly have a book open by his side, to refer to, while sipping his coffee, like his own Oldbuck in the Antiquary. His uncle frequently commanded him to lay aside his book while eating, and Walter would only ask permission first to read out the paragraph in which he was engaged. But this request resembled the miracle of *Balmerino's eik* in conviviality,† and the doctor never could find that his nephew finished a paragraph in his life. It may be mentioned that Shakspeare was at this period frequently in his hands, and that of all his plays, the Merchant of Venice was his principal favourite."

In his father's house, it would appear from these sketches, young Scott found himself transported into a very different class of society from what he had been accustomed to in Roxburgshire. It was a new world opening upon him. But his connection with the simpler, and, as they are called, lower classes of society, was not at an end. Voracious for stories, he clung to every person who could satisfy his appetite. He has embalmed the memory of John M'Kinlay—"an old servant of my father's, an excellent old Highlander, without a fault, unless a preference to mountain-dew over less potent liquors, be accounted one"—in his

\* "At the bottom of Hyndford's close, near the Netherbow."

† "A way of drinking a whole night at one bowl, by means of perpetual but always partial replenishing. *Eik* signifies addition, and in this case sometimes referred to the sugar, sometimes to the liquor, and sometimes, but less frequently, to the water. Which of the Lords Balmerino was the inventor of this ingenious practice is not recorded."

last introduction to Guy Mannering. A kindly connection too was kept up between the various nurses and their respective foster-children, it being an observance in the family that each of the former received her nursing's old clothes as they were laid aside, for the use of her own children. It was by such ties that the more fortunate sons of Adam were formerly reminded in Scotland of their duty to their poorer brethren. Walter's nurse, Lizzy Cranston, (by marriage Mrs. Borthwick,) lived in a cottage near the Grange, and used to supply the family with eggs. But there is one of those more humble friends of the family, who seems worthy to be more particularly introduced to the reader, although, as she still survives, delicacy induces us to withhold her name.

She entered Mr. Scott's house about the year 1779, about the period of Walter's return from the country; and seems to have been intrusted with a more special charge of him than the rest of the servants. During the first year of his attendance upon the High School he slept with her. Although then only a girl of fifteen, she had been educated in the strictness of the Burgher secession, and was even then so remarkable for a pious turn of mind, that on one occasion, when a ball of fire passed over Warrender's park, and Walter's young nurse was asked for amid the alarm and confusion of the moment, he observed, that "Becky would be at her prayers." When Becky left the house in 1784 on the occasion of her marriage to a respectable citizen, Walter officiated as her husband's best man, drank tea with the young folks at the house of the bride's mother, and faithfully attended their "kirk-ing" both forenoon and afternoon.\* In virtue of her slight superiority in years, and the high estimation in which she stood with her master and mistress, this good woman seems to have assumed something of the character of a monitress towards her charge, and to have kept it up in after life. Her ultra-presbyterian notions were particularly shocked at Walter's relaxation from the strictness of his father's *profession*, and still more by his ultimate lapse into prelacy. This, and her free habits of uttering her opinions, seem to have latterly begotten a degree of coldness and alienation between them. It may be fanciful, but we think that we can trace in this incident the rudiments of the somewhat caricatured picture of Christie Steele, in the *Chronicles of the Canongate*.

\* "Kirk-ing," the first appearance of a new married pair in church after their union. It is incumbent upon the bride's maid and bridegroom's man, (the seconds in this protracted duel,) to be in attendance. The "kirk-ing" took place on the occasion narrated in the text, in a Methodist Chapel then temporarily occupied by the Rev. Dr. Hall, a Burgher clergyman. This worthy gentleman had tied the noose matrimonial, and was "much taken with Walter," saith the lady, "and had a great work with him afterwards."

He had only to heighten the feelings which Mrs. ——— entertained, by attributing their excitation to the libertine Croftangry, and to bestow upon his imaginary being a keener temper, and there stood the stern repulsive dissenter, her devoted love to her mistress preserved more intense by hatred to the profligate son, as honey is kept purest in the heart of the hard rough oak. It is in this sense that there is truth in the often misapprehended assertion, that a poet can only write from feeling. The same emotions exist originally in every human breast; it is the operation of external circumstances, or of one luxuriant passion shooting up and smothering beneath its broad and leafy shade its weaker brethren, that creates aberration and crime. The first promptings of the emotions which drove astray a Richard III., a Ravallac, or a Marat, may be heard in faint whispers even in the purest breast. The imagination of the poet catching at these hints is enabled to enter into the feelings of the worst criminal, and thus to evoke his dark and troubled spirit again to fret its hour in the shadowy world of fiction.

The mind of Scott was not, however, a mere passive recipient of impressions, even at the early period of life to which our narrative at present relates. His active fancy was even at this early period struggling to recreate and arrange them into a world of his own. He had already learned to emulate the story-tellers by whom his boyhood had been surrounded. His proficiency in the art will be best told in his own words:—"I must refer to a very early period of my life, were I to point out my first achievements as a tale-teller—but I believe most of my old schoolfellows can yet bear witness that I had a distinguished character for that talent, at a time when the applause of my companions was my recompense for the disgraces and punishments which the future romance-writer incurred for being idle himself, and keeping others idle, during hours that should have been employed on our tasks. The chief enjoyment of my holidays was to escape with a chosen friend, who had the same taste with myself, and alternately to recite to each other such wild adventures as we were able to devise. We told each in turn interminable tales of knight-errantry, and battles, and enchantments, which were continued from one day to another as opportunity offered without our ever thinking of bringing them to a conclusion. As we observed a strict secrecy on the subject of this interview, it acquired all the character of a concealed pleasure, and we used to select for the scenes of our indulgence, long walks through the solitary and romantic environs of Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Crags, Braid Hills, and similar places in the vicinity of Edinburgh; and the recollection of these holidays still forms an oasis in the pilgrimage which I have to look back upon."

Our readers who have been educated at a public school in Scotland,

cannot fail to have been engaged in such petty warfare as is described by Sir Walter in his introduction to the story of *Green-Breeks*. And such of them as may have been tinged in their youth with a slight shade of the romantic, heightened by the stolen perusal of works of fiction, must remember the delight which they experienced while investing their combats with a mock dignity derived from viewing them as representations of the battles they read of in story. Some feeling of this kind seems to have suggested to "the future romance-writer" another medium of giving utterance to his thick-coming fancies; in the use of which his parents seem to have acquiesced with more readiness than their dislike to the theatre would have led us to anticipate. Walter, with the aid of his brothers and sister, and some other young friends, were allowed to act plays in the dining-room. The household served them for an audience, the window-hangings for scenes, and the dresses were doubtless in strict keeping with the rest of the decorations. Walter was the best reciter, and took upon him the principal parts. Our informant remembers him enacting the part of Richard III. It affords a curious matter of conjecture what the boy's feeling might be when repeating the lines,—

"Why I who halt and am mis-shapen thus!"

Another of their stock-pieces was *Jane Shore*, in which Miss Scott represented the heroine, but Walter's part has not been remembered.

Both in the long narratives of chivalry interchanged with his confident, and in his exertions as manager of theatricals, we recognise the unconscious working of those faculties which made the future poet. But another circumstance co-operated to give him a bias towards literature. The society into which he was introduced at his uncle's house, where, as he has himself informed us, he first met with that strange monster, a live poet, in the person of Dr. Cartwright, author of "*Osmyn and Elvira*," taught him to feel the value of literary distinction; and the exercises which he was called upon to perform in the rector's class, rendered him familiar with the notion of composition. That he had collected under these auspices a stock of the set phrases which go to constitute fine writing, and felt some pride in being able to turn them into a pretty sentence, will appear from the following anecdote, which is given on the authority of a lady who was present. "At a tea-party in Mr. Scott's house, a lady was complaining of the heavy rains that had then recently fallen in the Highlands, where she had been on a visit. Walter, upon hearing this, looked out from below the table where he had ensconced himself upon all-fours, and said, 'That's Caledonia weeping for the poverty of her soil.'"



It was about the same time that he made his first attempt at original versification, the fate of which he has himself left upon record. "At one period of my school-boy days I was so far left to my own desires, as to become guilty of verses on a thunder-storm, which were much approved of, until a malevolent critic sprung up, in the shape of an apothecary's blue-buskined wife who affirmed that my most sweet poetry was stolen from an old magazine. I never forgave the imputation, and even now I acknowledge some resentment against the poor woman's memory. She indeed accused me unjustly, when she said I had stolen my brooms ready made; but as I had, like most premature poets, copied all the words and ideas of which my verses consisted, she was so far right, that there was not an original word or thought in the whole six lines. I made one or two faint attempts at verse after I had undergone this sort of daw-plucking at the hands of the apothecary's wife, but some friend or other always advised me to put my verses in the fire, and like Dorax in the play, I submitted, though 'with a swelling heart.'"

The history of these unfortunate lines, and the lines themselves, have been transmitted to us by a friend, whose story we submit to the reader in his own words, premising that he says of the anecdote, "its authenticity I can vouch for." "When a boy at school, Walter was one day overtaken by a storm of thunder and lightning. His mother, who was anxiously expecting him home, was alarmed at his non-appearance, and on his return began to reprimand him severely for staying so long out. The boy excused himself, by saying that he had gone into a common-stair for shelter, and impressed by the awfulness of the scene around him, had written some lines, which he forthwith presented to her. Though possessed of little intrinsic merit, they are interesting, as the first attempt of the poet."

"Loud o'er my head when awful thunders roll,  
And vivid lightnings flash from pole to pole;  
It is thy voice my God which bids them fly,  
Thy voice directs them through the vaulted sky:  
Then let the good thy mighty power reverse,  
And hardened sinners thy just judgment fear."

If in his story-telling adventures and theatrical undertakings we recognise the innate irrepressible workings of the imagination; in the oracle which spoke from beneath the tea-table, and in these sufficiently common-place verses, we see the fruits of the cultivation of his powers of language by external influences. Every day's experience teaches us the possibility of indoctrinating young minds into the use of words. A dexterous application of fine phraseology often veils poverty of thought.

The most empty heads are often the most specious talkers. No wonder then that a talent which may be successfully cultivated where neither conception nor imagination exists, may be forced to a premature ripeness in a mind richly endowed with both. His masters could teach the boy to speak—we may teach a parrot to do as much—but those faculties which give weight and value to words were nature's own, and could not be ripened by any art into a precocious and short-lived maturity. The equable progress of his powers was thus disjointed. Imagination and the power of expression go to make up the poet. Both existed in the breast of Scott in no common degree of power and intensity, but his immature imagination had not yet discovered the mode in which it was to manifest its creations to others, and his talent for verbal expression, unwedded as yet to substantial thought, sounded chill and hollow.

Such was the state of his mind at the time when his High School career terminated, and he was transferred to the University. His name first appears in the College-books in 1783. In the roll of the Humanity class, taught by Professor Hill, it is entered in his own hand, "*Gaulterus* Scott." In the roll of the Greek class, taught by Professor Dalzell, the spelling is correct. The name is written in a stiff school-boy hand, but quite legible. What character he sustained in these classes seems only to have escaped the recollection of his cotemporaries. Nor is it a matter of the slightest consequence. The early age at which boys are admitted to our Scottish Universities, and the nature of the studies pursued in the junior classes, render the first year of a college life in reality a blank in our existence. When Universities were first established in this country, they were the only seminaries of instruction. The pupil commenced his education there, and it was of consequence that he should enter at an early age, and be initiated into the very rudiments of learning. But now that so many excellent elementary schools abound every where, to persist in admitting children, who were more fitly confined to the strict rule of the pedagogue, to the comparatively liberal discipline of a college, is the height of absurdity. If old enough for the university, the young student has already learned at school all that is taught in the junior humanity and Greek classes, and is wasting his time; if he has been taken prematurely from school, he has been emancipated from that system of tuition which might have made of him an accurate scholar, in order that he may be taught after a more slovenly and inadequate fashion.

In 1784, "*Gaulterus* Scott" occurs again in the roll of the second Greek class; and "Walter Scott" in that of the Logic class, then taught by Professor Bruce. His attendance upon these classes was, however, in all probability speedily terminated by the bursting of a blood-vessel, and a long tract of bad health, of which that event was the initiative.

The interruption thus given to the plan of education which paternal care had sketched out for him, and habits acquired during the term of indulgence afforded to the invalid, mark the period of his life which ensued as entirely distinct from that which we have hitherto been surveying. This interruption was, moreover, coincident in point of time with that sudden development of the physical constitution, which, productive of a new class of feelings, seems often to change the entire character. His sickness, which was in all probability an effort of nature to work off the dregs of early infirmity, seems almost to have been providentially interposed to chain him down, and afford him leisure to acquire those habits which were to ensure his future eminence. His entrance into animal existence was through pain and suffering, and the mental birth was destined to be attended with analogous pangs.

Here then we close that portion of our narrative dedicated to the boyhood of Walter Scott. As the infant gathers its physical strength in balmy slumber, "rocked by the beating of its mother's breast," so the mind in extreme youth collects its energies while swayed, without exertion of its own, hither and thither upon the heaving tide of circumstance. The history of a boy is more properly that of the persons and circumstances among which his lot has been cast. At the most, it is but the first feeble struggles of a human being to indicate an independent personality, like the flame on the domestic hearth forcing its way in brief and transient flashes through the superincumbent load of fuel, or like the crowing baby, exerting with ecstatic astonishment its newly discovered power of detaining objects in its grasp. The character of the earlier years of the period to which we are next to direct the reader's attention, will not differ materially from what we have hitherto been contemplating; but as we advance, the figure of the principal person concerned will naturally stand out in bolder relief. It is the attribute of mankind to aim at rendering all surrounding objects subordinate to their purposes; and a man is truly great, truly a man, only in so far as he attains the object of his wishes; he is good only in so far as that object is commendable.

## CHAPTER II.

ADOLESCENCE. 1785—1796.

Almost close upon the commencement of the winter session of 1784-85, to borrow the phraseology both of our universities and our courts of justice, Walter Scott was subjected to a violent attack of sickness, for the only distinct account of which we are indebted to himself. "When boyhood," he says, "advancing into youth required more serious studies, and graver cares, a long illness threw me back on the kingdom of fiction, as it were by a species of fatality. My indisposition arose, in part at least, from my having broken a blood-vessel; and motion and speech were for a long time pronounced positively dangerous. For several weeks I was confined strictly to my bed, during which time I was not allowed to speak above a whisper, to eat more than a spoonful or two of boiled rice, or to have more covering than one thin counterpane. When the reader is informed that I was at this time a growing youth, with the spirits, appetite, and impatience of fifteen, and suffered, of course, greatly under this severe regimen, which the repeated return of my disorder rendered indispensable, he will not be surprised that I was abandoned to my own discretion, so far as reading (my almost sole amusement) was concerned, and still less so, that I abused the indulgence which left my time so much at my own disposal.

"There was at this time a circulating library in Edinburgh, founded, I believe, by the celebrated Allan Ramsay, which, besides containing a most respectable collection of books of every description, was, as might have been expected, peculiarly rich in works of fiction. It exhibited specimens of every kind, from the romances of chivalry, and the ponderous folios of Cyrus and Cassandra, down to the most approved works of later times. I was plunged into this great ocean of reading without compass or pilot; and unless when some one had the charity to play chess with me, I was allowed to do nothing save read, from morning to night. I was, in kindness and pity, which was perhaps erroneous, however natural, permitted to select my subjects of study at my own pleasure, upon the same principle that the humours of children are indulged to keep them out of mischief. As my taste and appetite were gratified in nothing else, I indemnified myself by becoming a glutton of books. Accordingly I believe I read almost all the romances, old plays, and epic poetry, in that formidable collection, and no doubt was uncon-

sciously amassing materials for the task in which it has been my lot to be so much employed.

“At the same time, I did not in all respects abuse the license permitted to me. Familiar acquaintance with the specious miracles of fiction brought with it some degree of satiety, and I began, by degrees, to seek in histories, memoirs, voyages, and the like, events nearly as wonderful as those which were the work of imagination, with the additional advantage that they were at least in a great measure true. The lapse of nearly two years, during which I was left to the exercise of my own free will, was followed by a temporary residence in the country, where I was again very lonely, but for the amusement which I derived from a good though old-fashioned library. The vague and wild use which I made of this advantage, I cannot describe better than by referring my reader to the desultory studies of Waverley in a similar situation; the passages concerning whose course of reading were imitated from collections of my own.”

In allotting the period of two years to his confinement in town after this attack of sickness, Sir Walter must have spoken from a very vague recollection; for although unable to recover precise information respecting the dates of its commencement and termination, circumstances enable us to approximate very closely to them, and the result seems to confine both the duration of his illness and of his residence in the country considerably within the limits of the time he has mentioned. We find his name, as has already been stated, entered in the books of the University of Edinburgh in his own hand, in November 1784, sufficient evidence that he was then in good health, and looking forward to a winter's attendance upon the classes. Next we find the following entry in the minute-book of the Society of Writers to the Signet:—"15th May, 1786.—Compeared Walter Scott, and presented an indenture, dated 31st March last, entered into between him and Walter Scott, his son, for five years from the date thereof, under a mutual penalty of £40 sterling." Lastly, we have Sir Walter's own testimony that he met Burns in Edinburgh in the winter of 1786-87. The ascertained dates of subsequent events forbid us to assign this illness to a later period of his career; and the certainty of a near relative who still survives, that he paid a long visit to the neighbourhood of Kelso during his fourteenth or fifteenth year, is an additional circumstance for believing that it occurred at the time we have fixed upon. We assume, therefore, that his long confinement and his subsequent visit to the country, occurred between the close of 1784 and some time in 1786. He may have returned to his father's house in May, the date of the registry of his indenture, or he may have been allowed to remain in the country till the fall of the year, but certain

it is that he was in Edinburgh, and alive and merry, in the winter of 1786.

To the list given by Sir Walter of the amusements of his sick-chamber, the reminiscences of a cotemporary authorise us to add drawing. We speak on the authority of an amateur artist, a lady no less conspicuous for her early beauty, than for a strong and original cast of mind, an intimate friend, moreover, of that wayward genius Skirving, when we say that Scott's mother was no mean proficient in this elegant accomplishment. It was natural, therefore, that with the imitative propensities of boyhood, he should betake him during the tedious hours of sickness to the scratching of flowers on paper. At that early age, however, the real sense of art has never been found developed. It is merely the power of imitating form or colour with more or less accuracy, and feeling a harmless pride in comparative success. To express beauty through the medium of counterfeit resemblance of external nature, is a faculty which lies dormant till a later period of life. That Sir Walter never, in after-life, felt any vocation to the pencil, is one strong ground for believing that he was not possessed of this faculty. That he found pleasure in gazing upon the creations of art, and in the conversation of eminent artists, is undoubted, but in like manner many who have the sense of harmony and melody very imperfectly developed, are susceptible of being much excited by music. Another ground yet more relevant is a paper which he not many years ago communicated to a fashionable annual, in reply to a note from the editor, requesting him to point out a subject for the engraver. The subject which he does suggest is little adapted for pictorial representation, and the mode of handling still less. The truth is, that although the object both of the poet and the painter is to create the beautiful, the *media* of their operations is so different as to require in the workman faculties totally distinct, and, to judge by experience, almost incompatible in the human mind; at least Michael Angelo alone seems to have united them. The poet presents us with a thousand restless and shifting associations, which the mind reviews with rapture as they flutter past, and out of which it strives to collect and create an enduring image. The painter presents us with one fixed and defined image, which pleases, partly by its own loveliness, but more (in most minds) by the associations of passion and breathing life which it suggests. Intense passion is the soul of both creations, but in the one it is clothed in a body of palpable visible form, in the other it tenants a Proteus-like succession of vague and airy shapes.

We return from this digression to record the existence of a perishable memorial of this period of Scott's life. On a window of the house in George Square, at that time inhabited by his father's family, there may still be seen the following inscription, scratched with a diamond, in a

hand strikingly similar to that which he wrote the last, but with more ambitious tails to the capital letters. "Walter Scott—1785—ha, who art thou?—Begone." It is perhaps a foolish fancy which connects this trifle with the impatience of the tardy convalescent; but still the name and the date lend it an importance which rarely attaches to scrawls upon a pane of glass. Such of our readers as are not too old to remember the feelings of fifteen, when the impetuosity of young emotion, unable as yet to vent itself in deeds or thought, prompts not unfrequently disjointed exclamations like that above, which, if overheard, bring the red blush into the face, and overwhelm with a sense of awkwardness—may find even in the disjointed scrawl which we have preserved an index to the boy's state of mind.

No other record of his sick apartment has reached us, and we hasten to follow him to Roxburghshire. A brother of his father, Captain Robert Scott, had entered the East India Company's naval service in early life, and returned to his native country about the year 1784, with a respectable competency. In 1785 he purchased from the heirs of a Dr. Jackson the small property of Rosebank, in the immediate neighbourhood of Kelso. Captain Scott is described by the few who remember him, as a pleasant, gentlemanly man, with no small degree of that sturdy pride which men of decided character derive from the consciousness of being the makers of their own fortunes. He was in the commission of the peace, and discharged the duties of a magistrate with strict impartiality. He was a keen advocate for a canal at that time projected between Berwick and Kelso; and took an active part in the survey made by Mr. Telfer the engineer, to serve as the basis of his report on the practicability of the measure. Captain Scott occupied a good deal of his time in improving the property he had purchased, making additions to the house, and keeping his garden and ornamental grounds in order. He never married; but installed his sister, our good old friend Miss Jenny, into the office of housekeeper, and took pleasure in seeing his nephews and nieces, and indeed all his friends around him. The scanty notices we have been able to collect of this gentleman leave a most favourable impression of his character. To the high sense of honour, and clear-sighted activity of the sailor, he seems to have united a cordial and benevolent disposition. In his taste for agricultural pursuits, and in the anxious desire he testified, by settling his estate upon his nephew Walter, to keep up his remembrance in the land, we trace the gradual progress of honest ambition, from the good grandsire, proud of being the most enterprising farmer of his district, through the small laird, to the baronial splendour of the master of Abbotsford. The sphere of family activity widens as it rolls onward, but a fresh spirit, "tasting of Flora

and the country green," breathes bracingly over it through the whole career of increasing importance.

To the house of this gentleman young Walter was sent, in the hope that the air and soil which had proved so congenial to his sickly childhood might again re-invigorate him. He found himself restored to the care of his old nurse, "Aunt Jenny," and, in attendance upon her, he met again the playmates of his childhood. But he also met with more new friends than his uncle. "In early youth," he somewhere says, and he alludes to this period of his life, "I resided for a considerable time in the vicinity of the beautiful village of Kelso, where my life passed in a very solitary manner. I had few acquaintances, scarce any companions, and books, which were at the time almost essential to my happiness, were difficult to come by. It was then that I was particularly indebted to the liberality and friendship of an old lady of the Society of Friends, eminent for her benevolence and charity. Her deceased husband had been a medical man of eminence, and left her, with other valuable property, a small and well-selected library. This the kind old lady permitted me to rummage at pleasure, and carry home what volumes I chose, on condition that I should take, at the same time, some of the tracts printed for encouraging and extending the doctrines of her own sect. She did not even exact any assurance that I would read these performances, being too justly afraid of involving me in a breach of promise, but was merely desirous that I should have the chance of instruction within my reach, in case whim, curiosity, or accident, might induce me to have recourse to it."

The lady here painted in such amiable colours was the mother of ——— Waldie, Esq. of Henderside, writer in Kelso, one of whose sons, Robert, who died young, attended Whale's school in Kelso at the same time with Sir Walter. George, another son, who survived his father, and succeeded to the property, was the father of the authoress of "Rome in the Nineteenth Century," who seems to have inherited much of the amiable spirit and high talents of her great grandmother. This venerable person was always known by the name of "Lady Waldie," a name which, when applied by a Scottish peasant to one who has no hereditary claim to the title, is no common tribute of respect. It is expressive of blended dignity and gentleness, of diffusive benevolence, and purity in word and deed in the party thus designated, so genuine and impressive as even to breathe their softening influence over the minds of a rough-witted, fearless race, more inclined to pass shrewd and caustic remarks upon their superiors in wealth and station, than to pay them a slavish homage. The character of the Scottish peasant is indeed a strange mixture of passive obedience with undaunted maintenance of the right of private judgment. Scarcely any motive is sufficient to sting him to in-



subordination; but he never attempts to shut his eyes to the worthlessness of those beneath whose lash he crouches. He dares to be a tame slave, without seeking to reconcile himself to his situation by attributing fancied virtues to his master.

But to return to "Lady Waldie." She was, as her *protégé* narrates of her, a member of the Society of Friends, but no bigot to her sect. She did not hesitate to attend the parish church. It has indeed been handed down to us by tradition, that on one occasion when Mr. Cornelius Lundie (father of the late Mr. R. Lundie, minister of Kelso) was preaching, *the spirit* moved the good lady, and she spoke; but whether in rebuke or confirmation of the clergyman's doctrine has been forgotten. This story, however, is at the best apocryphal, and the testimony of those who knew the lady represents her not only as a woman of fervent piety and great benevolence, but also as possessed of an unwontedly cultivated mind. "She was," says an old lady, whose recollections extend back to the days of Scott's boyhood, "she was a great observer of the stars and heavenly bodies; frequently looking at them and talking of them. Walter used to say, that 'she was aye looking to heaven.'" This little anecdote indicates the rich and susceptible mind of the speaker, but it likewise conveys a delightful image of her who could make so strong an impression upon him. Mrs. Waldie rises before us as she was in life, with her quiet dignity and refinement, her religious enthusiasm, and intellectual romance, her purity of mind, and her demure sagacity.

Scott's craving for books found another source whence to satisfy itself, on the well-covered shelves of a circulating library in Kelso, kept by a Mr. Elliot. This librarian is still remembered as a polite, formal old man, with a well-powdered head. He had that kind of taste which does not extend beyond a keen sense of the beauty of orderly arrangement and neatness, was of a shrewd turn of mind, and spoke plausibly. His stock of knowledge, particularly in what regarded antiquarian matters, was pretty extensive, and his assortment of books was tolerably various. Both the man and his establishment possessed a strong power of attraction for the convalescent.

A passage in an "Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad," prefixed to the third volume of the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," inclines us to refer to the period of the author's first visit to his uncle Robert, his introduction to the collections of the Bishop of Drumore. "In early youth I had been an eager student of ballad poetry, and the tree is still in my recollection, beneath which I lay and first entered upon the enchanting perusal of Percy's 'Reliques of Ancient Poetry,' although it has long perished in the general blight which affected the whole race of oriental platanus to which it belonged." The thread of

association is, we confess, but slender, being nothing stronger than the similarity in point of sentiment between the landscape conjured up by these words, and the fair and fertile environs of Kelso. Several allusions, however, scattered through Scott's writings, tend to confirm us in the opinion that it is to a time closely bordering on that of his indisposition that we are to refer his first acquaintance with Percy's book.

The perusal of that work, originally published in 1765, by giving him a taste for ballad literature, naturally led him on to the kindred publications of Herd and Evans. Herd, "an accountant, as the profession is called in Edinburgh, was known and generally esteemed for his shrewd, manly common sense and antiquarian science, mixed with much good nature and great modesty. His hardy and antique mould of countenance, and his venerable grizzled locks, procured him amongst his acquaintance the name of Greysteil." His collection was an attempt to do for Scottish what the bishop had accomplished for English traditional song. Evans' work, in which some poems of modern date were intermingled with the old ballads, appeared originally in 1777, and afterwards, considerably enlarged, in 1784. "This collection contained," says Sir Walter, "several modern pieces of great merit, which are not to be found elsewhere, and which are understood to be the production of William Julius Mickle, translator of the *Lusiad*, though they were never claimed by him, nor received among his works." Turning to the last edition of *Kenilworth*, we find in the preface the following passage:—"There is a period in youth when the mere power of numbers has a more strong effect on ear and imagination, than in more advanced life. At this season of immature taste, the author was greatly delighted with the poems of Mickle and Langhorne,—poets who, though by no means deficient in the higher branches of their art, were eminent for their powers of verbal melody above most who have practised this department of poetry. One of those pieces of Mickle, which the author was particularly pleased with, is a ballad, or rather a species of elegy, on the subject of Cumnor Hall, which, with others by the same author, were to be found in 'Evans' *Ancient Ballads*,' to which work Mickle made liberal contributions. The first stanza,\* especially, had a peculiar species of enchantment for the youthful ear of the author, the force of which is not even now entirely spent; some others are sufficiently prosaic." We find Sir Walter referring his acquaintance with the poetry of Langhorne and Mickle to the same period; we find him mention-

\* "The dews of summer night did fall;  
The moon, sweet regent of the sky,  
Silver'd the walls of Cumnor Hall,  
And many an oak that grew thereby."

ing as one of his first loves the ballad of Cumnor Hall, which only appeared in Evans' second edition; and we know from the account he has given of his interview with Burns, that he was familiar with the writings of Langhorne in 1786. This chain of circumstances, although not drawn sufficiently to establish conviction, points with tolerable pertinacity to the conjecture we have hazarded above.

It has already been remarked, that the precise period of Scott's return from Rosebank, to enter upon the duties of a writer's clerk, has not been ascertained. The date of the registry of his indenture cannot satisfactorily enable us to make any approximation, for it may have been effected with a prospective view to his commencing them as soon as his return should be deemed expedient. Certain, however, it is, that he passed the winter 1786-87 in Edinburgh, as sufficiently appears from the account given by himself in a letter to his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, of an important era in his life—his interview with Burns.

"As for Burns, I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum*. I was a lad of fifteen in 1786-7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him; but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner, but had no opportunity to keep his word; otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Ferguson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course we youngsters sate silent, looked and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns' manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on the one side, on the other his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath,—

'Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,  
Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain—  
Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew;  
The big drops, mingling with the milk he drew,  
Gave the sad presage of his future years,  
The child of misery baptised in tears.'

"Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were, and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that

they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's, called by the unpromising title of 'The Justice of the Peace.' I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received and still recollect with very great pleasure.

"His person was strong and robust: his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture, but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I would have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scottish school, i. e. none of your modern agriculturists, who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the *douce gadman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone I think indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large and of a dark cast, and glowed, (I say literally *glowed*.) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men in my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted, nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognise me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh, but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

"I remember on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns' acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited, and also, that having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he talked of them with too much humility as his model; there was doubtless national predilection in his estimate."

The lad who could be so deeply impressed with the appearance of Burns in one interview, as to retain, after an interval of forty years, such a vivid picture of his outer man, and who was widely enough read to detect the comparatively limited extent of Burns' reading, and who was already capable of feeling his superiority to Ramsay and Ferguson, had outgrown the years of boyhood. His mind was rapidly advancing towards maturity. Nor were his poetical exercises continued upon so limited a scale, as his words, "I made one or two faint attempts at

verse," would lead us to suppose. A gentleman who about this time was in habits of daily and familiar intercourse with him, remembers being shown a poem which he had composed on the "Conquest of Granada." It extended to four books, each containing about four hundred lines. This production he burned very soon after it was finished. Our informant proceeds :—He told *extempore*, and most fluently, admirable stories of his own invention. He was also most ready with *extempore* poetry, or at least rhymes. In fact, he could almost have conversed in rhyme."

It must have been close upon the event we have just recorded, that the "suspended animation," adverted to in the following sentence, stole over his rhyming powers. "In short, excepting the usual tribute to a mistress's eyebrow, which is the language of passion rather than poetry, I had not for ten years indulged the wish to couple so much as *love* and *dove*, when finding Lewis in possession of so much reputation, and conceiving that if I fell behind him in poetical powers, I considerably exceeded him in general information, I suddenly took it into my head to attempt the style by which he had raised himself to fame." The "Monk" was published in 1795, and as the burning of "The Conquest of Granada" happened in 1786, there is no space left for any subsequent attempts. With one exception, which will fall to be noticed hereafter, we have no indications of the turn which his studies now took, till we find him attending Dugald Stewart's lectures on Moral Philosophy in the year 1790. There are two circumstances, however, which enable us to give a shrewd guess at their character. In 1786, we find him busied with Percy, Evans, and Herd. Owing to the hot controversy which arose between the first-named author and Ritson, the amateurs of old ballad poetry were led to plunge deeper than they at first expected into philological and antiquarian discussions. When we again recover the thread of Scott's studies in 1790, we find him uncommonly well versed in northern antiquities. "Putting that to that," as the old wives say, there can remain little doubt as to the nature of his favourite pursuits during the interval.

Such readers as have at any time known experimentally the seductive and engrossing nature of antiquarian research, (study we can scarcely call it,) in which the mind wanders on from ratiocination to lazy contemplation of picturesque images, hovering as it were on the verge of the regions of stern thought and pleasant dreams, sufficiently active to escape ennui, sufficiently indolent to escape fatigue, will agree with us that reminiscences of his own official delinquencies suggested in all probability the description of the legal studies of the laird of Monkbarrow.

"He was then put apprentice to the profession of a writer, or attorney, in which he profited so far, that he made himself master of the

whole forms of feudal investitures, and showed such pleasure in reconciling their incongruities, and tracing their origin, that his master had great hope he would one day be an able conveyancer. But he halted upon the threshold, and, though he acquired some knowledge of the origin and system of the law of his country, he could never be persuaded to apply it to lucrative and practical purposes. It was not from any inconsiderate neglect of the advantages attending the possession of money that he thus deceived the hopes of his master. 'Were he thoughtless or light-headed, or *rei suæ prodigus*,' said his instructor, 'I would know what to make of him. But he never pays away a shilling without looking anxiously after the change, makes his sixpence go farther than another lad's half-crown, and will ponder over an old black-letter copy of the acts of parliament for days, rather than go to the golf or the change-house; and yet he will not bestow one of those days on a little business of routine, that would put twenty shillings in his pocket—a strange mixture of frugality and industry, and negligent indolence,—I don't know what to make of him.' "

We suspect, however, that although his father might find him as wayward and unaccountable as Oldbuck, in respect to his ardent scrutiny into the antiquities and *outré* twistings of the law, and his aversion to all practical application of his knowledge, the resemblance stopped here. He had no dislike to amusements, either sedentary or active, nor any peculiar knack at making his money go farther than that of other people. He never acted regularly either as clerk or apprentice. A gentleman who was one of Mr. Scott's clerks during the period of Walter's nominal apprenticeship, assures us, that they had many a tough bout at chess in the office. "Mair by token," they were frequently interrupted by the inopportune entrance of the old gentleman; when pop, crash, down went chess-board and men into the desk, and the two delinquents assumed as grave and business-like a deportment as their trepidation would admit of.

That young Scott was allowed so much freedom, while under the *surveillance* of so strict a disciplinarian as his father, was in all probability owing to his recent delicate state of health. Parental anxiety would be naturally distrustful of apparently robust and florid health, in one who had suffered so much and so long; and as a necessary consequence, the supposed invalid would be allowed and encouraged to devote more time to exercise in the open air, than he would have otherwise been allowed to steal from the writing-desk. The consequence of such indulgence has been told by himself:—"Since my fourteenth or fifteenth year, my health, originally delicate, had been extremely robust. From infancy, I had laboured under the infirmity of a severe lameness, but, as I believe is usually the case with men of spirit who suffer under

personal inconveniences of this nature, I had, since the improvement of my health, in defiance of this incapacitating circumstance, distinguished myself by the endurance of toil on foot or horseback, having often walked thirty miles a day, and rode upwards of a hundred without stopping. In this manner, I made many pleasant journeys through parts of the country then not very accessible, gaining more amusement and instruction than I have been able to acquire since I have traveled in a more commodious manner. I practised most sylvan sports also, with some success and with great delight."

Our information respecting his country rambles, during the period of which we are at present narrating the history, *i. e.* previous to the year 1796, is extremely limited. We learn from his surviving relations, that he was in the habit of paying a visit of some length to his uncle, Captain Scott, every autumn. He used also at this time to pay an annual visit to the Highlands; and a gentleman, who was then in his father's office, remembers that he was frequently absent on minor excursions.

The Highlands afforded him a new field of observation;—a field at that time more congenial to his natural and acquired sympathies, than they could have done if in their present state. He has left it on record, in his Introduction to the first series of the *Chronicles of the Canongate*, that Alexander Stewart of Invernahyle was the friend who first introduced him to this district of his native land. And in the second series of the same work, he has favoured us with a description of his feelings when Perth first burst upon his view, from the Wicks of Baigie, on the occasion of his first trip to the north. "Childish wonder, indeed, was an ingredient in my delight, for I was not above fifteen years old, and as this had been the first excursion which I was permitted to make on a pony of my own, I also experienced the glow of independence, mingled with that degree of anxiety which the most conceited boy feels when he is first abandoned to his own undirected councils. I recollect pulling up the reins without meaning to do so, and gazing on the scene before me, as if I had been afraid it would shift like those in a theatre, before I could distinctly observe its different parts, or convince myself that what I saw was real. Since that hour, and the period is now more than fifty years past, the recollection of that inimitable landscape has possessed the strongest influence over my mind, and retained its place as a memorable thing, when much that was influential on my own fortunes has fled from my recollection."

At the abode of Mr. Stewart, he likewise found much that was calculated to make an enduring impression upon his mind. There was the worthy old gentleman himself, such as we have attempted to describe him above, with all his clannish and Jacobitical predilections. There was the cave where Invernahyle had lain concealed after the battle of

Culloden, so near the sentinels placed by the English troops who garrisoned his house that he could hear their muster-roll called. There were all the associations connected with one who had been out both in 1715 and 1745, and been deeply engaged in all the intrigues which filled up the space between these two memorable years; nay, who had even fought a broad-sword duel with Rob Roy. There was, too, Invernahyle's miller, "a grim-looking old Highlander," the same who was about to cleave Colonel Whitefoord with his Lochaber axe, when his master interfered; an incident which suggested an important part of the story of *Waverley*. In short, the wild and striking scenery of the district was inhabited by a people whose dress, language, manners, and actual history realised those legends upon which his boyish imagination had so fondly dwelt.

That Scott was on a subsequent occasion carried deeper into the recesses of the Highlands, seems likewise to have been caused more or less remotely by his family's connections with Invernahyle. The sum of 1000*l.* being the whole or part of Mrs. Scott's portion, had been lent upon a personal bond to Stewart of Appin, Invernahyle's chief and brother-in-law, and subsequently transformed into a burden on his estate in due form of law. The sequel of the story will be best narrated in Scott's own words.

"There were very considerable debts due by Stewart of Appin, (chiefly to the author's family,) which were likely to be lost to the creditors, if they could not be made available out of the farm of Invernenty, the scene of the murder done upon MacLaren by the son of Rob Roy."

"His family, consisting of several strapping deer-stalkers, still possessed the farm, by virtue of a long lease for a trifling rent. There was no chance of any one buying it with such an encumbrance, and a transaction was entered into by the MacLarens, who, being desirous to emigrate to America, agreed to sell their lease to the creditors of 500*l.*, and to remove at the next term of Whitsunday. But whether they repented their bargain, or desired to make a better, or whether from a mere point of honour, the MacLarens declared they would not permit a summons of removal to be executed against them, which was necessary for the legal completion of the bargain. And such was the general impression that they were men capable of resisting the legal execution of warning by very effectual means, no king's messenger would execute the summons without the support of a military force. An escort of a serjeant and six men was obtained from a Highland regiment lying in Stirling, and the author, then a writer's apprentice, equivalent to the honourable situation of an attorney's clerk, was invested with the superintendence of the expedition, with directions to see that the messenger discharged his duty fully, and that the gallant serjeant did not exceed his part by



committing violence or plunder. And thus it happened, oddly enough, that the author first entered the romantic scenery of Loch Katrine, of which he may perhaps say he has somewhat extended the reputation, riding in all the dignity of danger, with a front and rear guard, and loaded arms. The serjeant was absolutely a Highland Serjeant Kite, full of stories of Rob Roy and of himself, and a very good companion. We experienced no interruption whatever, and when we came to Invernenty, found the house deserted. We took up our quarters for the night, and used some of the victuals which we found there. On the morning we returned as unmolested as we came. The MacLarens, who probably never thought of any serious opposition, received their money and went to America, where, having had some slight share in removing them from their *paupera regna*, I sincerely hope they prospered."

In addition to Invernahyle's hospitable mansion, he was in these days a welcome visiter in the house of Mr. Edmonstone of Newton, to whom also he was in the habit of paying a yearly visit. The seat of the Edmonstone family is in the immediate vicinity of Doune Castle, one of the localities which figure in Waverley. The only allusion made by Sir Walter himself to this intimacy occurs in one of the notes attached to the last edition of the novel we have just mentioned. "This noble ruin is dear to my recollection, from associations which have been long and painfully broken." It is to these various visits that Sir Walter somewhere attributes the occurrence of so much "bad Gaelic," (so he is pleased to term it,) in his novels. It certainly does not appear, that with all his enthusiasm in behalf of the Gael, and all his researches into their manners and superstitions, he ever obtained a thorough knowledge of their language. His most intimate acquaintance with it never seems to have exceeded the power of quoting a few brocards, much after the fashion in which poor Burns paraded his half-a-dozen French phrases.

Scott's excursions to the south of Edinburgh, subsequent to his illness, and previous to the time when he was called to the bar, have been still more indistinctly remembered. They were the every-day occurrences to which he had been accustomed from infancy; they wanted the freshness and sharpness of scenery and manners to which he was introduced for the first time, and their memory became insensibly blended and confused with the events of after-years. The same cause has rendered the memory of his companions less accurate also; and thus we have been able to recover only two anecdotes of his adventures in Roxburghshire which can with any degree of certainty be referred to this period. Even of these the exact date is unattainable.

On one occasion, when on the eve of his departure for Roxburghshire, he called, like a dutiful nephew, upon his aunt, Miss Scott, who happened to be residing in Edinburgh at the time, to inquire whether she

had any commissions from the country. He was solemnly invited to tea, and informed that she had something which she wished to intrust to his care. When he took his leave in the evening, a nondescript parcel of a tolerable size was delivered to him with great formality, and many strict injunctions to look to its safety. "Tak' care o't, Wattie, for there's siller in't." The bearer was considerably teased, while on the road, by the incessant rattling and jingling which his charge kept up in his pocket, sorely to the annoyance of his poney. On reaching his journey's end, he hastened to deliver it to the blacksmith of the village, to whom it was addressed; intimating at the same time that he felt great curiosity to know the contents of the parcel, and adding, that he supposed from the sound and weight it must be Miss Scott's *poss*. "Deed, it's just ane o' your aunty's pattens, and tippence to mend it," was *Burn-the-win's* reply.

The other adventure to which we referred above is of more consequence, and paints the active benevolence of the young man in a very amiable light; but unfortunately it has reached us in a very imperfect state. The authority, however, from which we have it is beyond suspicion; and on this account we have judged it for the best to preserve the incident, in the hopes that some future biographer may be enabled to complete our imperfect story. A gentleman who resided at some distance from Rosebank had unfortunately been involved in a tedious litigation, which terminated in a caption being issued against him. He was at the time an invalid and bed-ridden, but his adversaries were nevertheless determined to enforce the rigour of the law. This resolution reached the ears of Scott a few hours before the time appointed for putting it into execution; and he, without a moment's delay, mounted and rode off to give the alarm. An eye-witness remembers him approaching the house of the invalid at a furious pace, his horse foaming, and his face flushed—both nearly blown. "Mount, mount for your life," he cried as he approached the house. His tale was soon told; the invalid, wrapped in blankets, was hurried into a vehicle of some sort, and conveyed to Edinburgh, where matters were arranged after some fashion or another. The narrator of this (not very distinct) anecdote, speaks of Scott's conduct in terms so warm as to convince us that the service rendered on the occasion must have been an important one. Few readers will fail to trace in the incident a certain degree of similarity to the death-scene of the laird of Ellangowan; an association which, in connection with the following passage from the preface to *Guy Mannering*, may help to guide some future and more fortunate investigator to all the particulars of the story. The narrative which we are about to quote is prefaced by the information, that "for particular reasons it must be expressed very generally."

"Such a preceptor as Mr. Sampson is supposed to have been, was actually tutor in the family of a gentleman of considerable property. The young lads, his pupils, grew up and went out in the world, but the tutor continued to reside in the family, no uncommon circumstance in Scotland, (in former days,) where food and shelter were readily afforded to humble friends and dependants. The laird's predecessors had been imprudent; he himself was passive and unfortunate. Death swept away his sons, whose success in life might have balanced his own bad luck and incapacity. Debts increased and funds diminished, till ruin came. The estate was sold; and the old man was about to remove from the house of his fathers, to go he knew not whither, when, like an old piece of furniture, which, left alone in its wonted corner, may hold together for a long while, but breaks to pieces on an attempt to move it, he fell down on his own threshold under a paralytic affection.

"The tutor awakened as from a dream. He saw his patron dead, and that his patron's only remaining child, now neither graceful nor beautiful, if she had been ever either the one or the other, had by this calamity become a harmless and penniless orphan. He addressed her nearly in the words which Dominie Sampson uses to Miss Bertram, and professed his determination not to leave her. Accordingly, roused to the exercise of talents which had long slumbered, he opened a little school, and supported his patron's child for the rest of her life, treating her with the same humble observance and devoted attention which he had used to her in the days of her prosperity." "Such," the author justly adds, "is the outline of Dominie Sampson's story, in which there is neither romantic incident nor sentimental passion; but which, perhaps, from the rectitude and simplicity of character it displays, may interest the heart and fill the eye of the reader as irresistibly as if it respected distresses of a more dignified and refined character."

While Scott was thus living on without any understood or definite aim, now paying a nominal attention to the business of the office, and again strengthening his body by exercise which few men could endure; at one time adding to his stores of antiquarian and other knowledge, simply because of the pleasure he took in their acquisition, at another unconsciously storing his mind with ideas from the homely and sturdy life of the borderers, or from the wildness of the Highlanders; an event occurred which was destined ultimately to have a strong influence upon the development of his powers. The advance which Scotland had hitherto made in literature lagged far behind her giant strides in science. Black had caught up the scent after which the continental chemists had been long busily puzzling, and the Scots were keeping abreast of the strongest and fleetest of their neighbours, in the full cry which now rushed along the true path of discovery. MacLaurin and Playfair had

illustrated the name of their country in the department of mathematical and physical science. Smith had given birth to a new branch of knowledge; for while his predecessors had been narrowed and misled in their investigations by continually keeping taxation in view, as the ultimate problem to be solved, he had abandoned himself to the scrutiny of the laws of nature untrammelled by conventional institutions, and had laboured to ascertain the laws which regulate the origin and distribution of wealth. Hume, the most original and profound of that race of masculine and unaffected thinkers, who laid deep and broad the foundations of Scottish intellectual fame, although misunderstood and ill appreciated, loaded with eulogy for his merely ornamental works, while his sublime metaphysical investigations were scorned and neglected, had laid the foundations of two widely differing systems of philosophy,—the Scottish of Reid and Stewart, the German of Kant. The minor departments and accessory investigations attached to those sciences, and all the practical branches of knowledge, medicine in particular, were filled with zealous, active, and intelligent labourers.

But although science had attained this high eminence, literature continued but a puny hot-house plant, throwing out tendrils beautiful and delicate, but deficient both in stamina and power. Smollet and Thomson had expatriated themselves, and could scarcely be regarded as Scottish literati. Ramsay had left but one enduring work behind him,—his *Gentle Shepherd*. Home's *Douglas* was beautiful, but cold and evanescent as the frost-spray that gems the boughs and twigs of a leafless tree in winter. Beattie's *Minstrel*, although it can only be characterised as sweet and tender, has a gentle loveliness which cannot fail to ensure it a much longer race of existence than has awaited what were commonly called (by courtesy) his philosophical writings. Mackenzie had touched some strings of the human heart with a delicate and skilful hand, but his essays reminded too much of Addison, his fictitious narrative of *Sterne*, to allow him to rank as an original imaginative author. Burns had already published some of his best works, but he stood alone, without sympathy or connection with the then existing literature of his country. The value of his poems was not then understood, the influence of his master mind had not yet been felt. He was looked down upon by the elegant scholars of the day with graceful sentiments of condescending superiority, wondering much that the language of the vulgar could be made the vehicle of poetry, and wondering still more that a ploughman should be able to speak and think, to use the language of Captain Bobadil, "almost or altogether as well as themselves."

We have named the whole of the Scottish authors of fiction who, at the period to which our narrative at present relates, were or had been in existence, and are likely to endure. The cold idealess epics of Wil-

kie, and the jangling of the numerous ballad-mongers who, called into existence by the success of Burns, thought the power of rhyming and the use of the Scottish dialect sufficient to ensure their success, may surely be passed over in silence. In England likewise the spirit of poetry seemed to be on the eve of dying out. The public attention directed to our old ballad poetry, instead of re-inspiring a healthy sense of the beauties of nature, had only directed the minds of men into a train of laborious antiquarian trifling. Some external influence was evidently necessary to rouse and re-invigorate the dormant imagination of the nation.

That impulse was given by the young and fervid, although in many instances fantastic literature of Germany. The fire which the authors of that country had caught from Shakspeare, they were destined to communicate again to the land of his birth, even as the writings of him and his contemporaries had borne in upon their darkness the torch which had been lighted at the pile kindled by Luther. Thus it would seem that the collective intellect of the world is, as it were, a chain along which the electric fire of thought runs in repeated revolutions. It would be diverging from our proper object to follow out in detail the progress of German literature in the affections of the British public. It must suffice to remark, that its more coarse and exaggerated portions—those works which addressed themselves more strongly to the sensual than to the purely imaginative portion of our nature—tales of sorcery and *diablerie*, of morbid and exaggerated passion; in short the Robbers of Schiller, the Werther of Goethe, and the Poems of Burger, and the Dramas of Kotzebue, were the first to find acceptance. The torpid palate could only be stimulated by brandy. By degrees, however, a taste for the nobler and purer productions of Germany gained a footing in some quarters. The works of Goethe's and Schiller's matured genius, the writings of Klopstock and Lessing, were studied and appreciated, at least by a select few, and some were found who even ventured to "go far sounding on their perilous way," through the inmost recesses of Kant's gigantic abstractions. When we have added to these indications this single remark, that the peculiar habits of thought indulged in by Coleridge and Wordsworth, men who more than any others have stamped their characters upon this age's literature, bold and original though they be, may be traced in the fountain to an intimate acquaintance with the literature and philosophy, we relinquish all further pursuit of the general inquiry, and restrict ourselves to our more immediate object.

The literary intercourse between Edinburgh and London was, at the time we speak of, comparatively limited. The progress of German literature in the former capital may therefore be traced apart. It fell to the lot of Henry Mackenzie first to direct the attention of his country-

men to his new-found treasure. His acquaintance with the writers of Germany was very limited, and, what was worse, obtained through the medium of very imperfect French translations. Modesty, however, was never the besetting sin of a Scottish critic, so he coolly adventured, in a sitting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, which was held on the 21st of April 1788, to propound, in a formal essay, his opinion of "The German Theatre." It would be waste of time to recur to a judgment based upon such inadequate knowledge for any useful information. It would be invidious to resuscitate a work so long allowed to slumber in oblivion, merely for the sake of pointing out its defects; the more so that to it we are indebted for a highly beneficial direction of the public mind. Enough that the novelty of the information it contained served to excite, and its surpassing elegance to conciliate. "Germany," he remarked, "in her literary aspect, presents herself to observation in a singular point of view; that of a country arrived at maturity, along with the neighbouring nations, in the arts and sciences, in the pleasures and refinements of manners, and yet only in its infancy with regard to writings of taste and imagination. This last path, however, from these very circumstances, she pursues with an enthusiasm which no other situation could perhaps have produced, the enthusiasm which novelty inspires, and which the servility incident to a more cultivated and critical state of literature does not restrain." Thus did the most successful cultivator among his cotemporaries of a style of literature such as he has described in these last words, become the herald of the ascendancy of the antagonist principle. His essay had, and was calculated to have a powerful effect. Its more immediate working, as far as it concerned Scott, is thus narrated by himself.

/"In Edinburgh, where the remarkable coincidence between the German language and that of the Lowland Scottish, encouraged young men to approach this newly discovered spring of literature, a class was formed of six or seven intimate friends, who proposed to make themselves acquainted with the German language. They were in the habit of living much together, and the time they spent in this new study was felt as a period of great amusement. One source of this diversion was the laziness of one of their number, the present author, who, averse to the necessary toil of grammar and its rules, was in the practice of fighting his way to the knowledge of the German by his acquaintance with the Scottish and Anglo-Saxon dialects, and, of course, frequently committed blunders which were not lost upon his more accurate and more studious companions. A more general source of amusement was the despair of the teacher, on finding it impossible to extract from his Scottish students the degree of sensibility necessary, as he thought, to enjoy the beauties of the author, to whom he considered it proper first to introduce them.

We were desirous to penetrate at once into the recesses of the Teutonic literature, and were ambitious of perusing Goethe and Schiller, and others whose fame had been sounded by Mackenzie. Dr. Willich, (a medical gentleman,) who was our teacher, was judiciously disposed to commence our studies with the more simple diction of Gessner, and prescribed to us 'The death of Abel,' as the production from which our German tasks were to be drawn. The pietistic style of this author was ill adapted to attract young persons of our age and disposition. We could no more sympathise with the overstrained sentimentality of Adam and his family, than we could have had a feeling for the jolly Faun of the same author, who broke his beautiful jug, and then made a song on it which might have moved all Staffordshire. To sum up the distresses of Dr. Willich, we, with one consent, voted Abel an insufferable bore, and gave the pre-eminence, in point of masculine character, to his brother Cain, or even to Lucifer himself. When these jests, which arose out of the sickly monotony and affected ecstasies of the poet, failed to amuse us, we had for our entertainment the unutterable sounds manufactured by a Frenchman, our fellow-student, who, with the economical purpose of learning two languages at once, was endeavouring to acquire German, of which he knew nothing, by English, concerning which he was nearly as ignorant. Heaven only knows the notes which he uttered, in attempting, with unpractised organs, to imitate the gutturals of these two untractable languages. At length in the midst of much laughing and little study, most of us acquired some knowledge, more or less extensive, of the German language, and selected for ourselves, some in the philosophy of Kant, some in the more animated works of the German dramatists, specimens more to our taste than 'The Death of Abel.' "

Mr. William Clerk, brother of the late Lord Eldin, and Mr. H. Guthrie Wright, with some others, were members of this German class. Its history is less interesting on account of the light it throws upon the progress of Sir Walter's studies in that language, than from the information it incidentally communicates respecting his disposition and habits of intellectual labour at this period of his career. It shows him in possession of that confirmed health which in youth is always the source of high and overflowing spirits, the boldest and gayest among his young compeers, turning at times even those studies he had most at heart to a jest. It shows him at the same time possessed of knowledge beyond his years; extensively if not profoundly acquainted with the history and with the ancient language of his country. At the same time, we find that his naturally powerful and comprehensive mind, abandoned so long to its own unrestrained pursuits, had invented a method of study for itself which was any thing but systematical. He seems, with an unexampled appetite for reading to have devoured every book that came in

his way, without order, arrangement, or purpose; and at leisure hours, with the aid of an astonishingly retentive memory, to have set to work to disentangle and arrange his multifarious knowledge. After this fashion he accumulated information to an extent that few have ever possessed, but of a kind that neither himself nor others could see the use of until the process of time turned his attention to novel writing. With all its extent, there was a want of precision and accuracy about his knowledge that rendered it alike inapplicable to the purposes of a moralist, a metaphysician, or a practical man. He was regarded by his lighter built companions as a huge dungeon of inapplicable knowledge. Their ephemeral minds shot out into form and existence in half a day; his world of intellect fermented for years in a state of chaos. It was with his German studies as with every thing else: he mastered the language after a fashion of his own; in a manner which enabled him at a later period to turn it to account, but never to become critically acquainted with it. Any attempts which he has made to express himself in German, are eminently ungrammatical.

Six years had elapsed from the interruption of Scott's college studies by illness, six years spent, as we have seen, betwixt the practice of athletic exercises, idling in a writer's office, and studies of the most desultory and multifarious character, when he resumed the character of a student at the Edinburgh University. In the college register for the year 1790, the name of Walter Scott occurs in the roll of the Scots Law Class, at that time taught by Professor Hume, and in that of the Moral Philosophy Class, taught by Dugald Stewart. It was then, as now, the practice for the majority of those young men whose destination is the Scottish bar, to become members of the Speculative Society, a name which has been blazoned broadly by the celebrity of many whose earliest displays of talent were made within its walls. With this custom, Scott, who had long been determined to become one of the "*noblesse de la robe*," complied; and accordingly we learn, from the minutes of the society, that on Tuesday, 14th December 1790, a petition from Mr. Walter Scott to be admitted a member was presented, read, and ordered to be balloted for at next meeting; that on Tuesday, the 21st December, he was duly elected; and that on Tuesday, the 4th January 1791, he took his seat for the first time.

Professor Hume, who still survives, although having since been promoted to a more lucrative office, he no longer fills the chair, is a nephew of the celebrated David Hume, and is said, by those who know him, to possess no small share of his uncle's subtilty of intellect. If we may judge, however, by his prelections, he is destitute of that comprehensive grasp of mind which enables a man to take bold leading views. He puzzled about resolving with infinite nicety the difficult points of law,



but failed in conveying to his auditors, what is of the utmost importance to the young lawyer, a systematic view of its whole extent. Towards the close of his career as a public teacher, this habit had gained so much upon him, that his lectures consisted of little more than classified notes of decisions. These remarks apply to him in the character of a commentator upon which a Benthamite would call the dispensative branch of the law of Scotland; his deficiencies in relation to the penal law were yet more dangerous.

What is called, in virtue of a rather equivocal provincialism, the *criminal law* of Scotland, is mainly what Bentham would call, in his nervous language, "Judge-made law." The Scottish penal statutes are few in number, and many of them obsolete, as much from the principles of the law of Scotland, which admits even of a statute being abrogated by desuetude, as by the obsolete nature of the social relations and crimes to which they are applicable. It was universally admitted in the old time, and is still a *pet* doctrine with many, that every offence against morality may be made a ground of accusation at the bar of the court of justiciary, as a crime of "the awin kind," (*sui generis*;) what is an offence against morality being a question left to the determination of the judge. With the exception of treason, the laws regarding which have, since the Union, been those of England, there are few of those offences which form the most frequent subject of inquiry before this court, that have not originally been smuggled in under this questionable form, and stamped matter of law by the sanction of prescription. The loose habits of thought and language superinduced upon those who have been long conversant with such a legal system, may easily be conceived. A system of penal jurisprudence thus vague and fluctuating, has, however, been rendered if possible more so from the gossiping inaccurate manner in which it has been treated by Professor Hume. It only remains to be added, that the professor has proved himself one of the most bigoted, meddling, and relentless upholders of the prerogative in a narrow-minded and persecuting age. Under his hands, the unintelligible crime of sedition has become ten times more mysterious than ever. In vague horror it transcends even Milton's Death.

With respect to the extent to which Scott benefited under this learned lawyer, the manner in which the business of the class was conducted, effectually prevents our forming any conjecture. Attendance was quite optional on the part of the student, and no exercises afforded him any opportunity of displaying his proficiency. Judging by the natural bent of Scott's mind, we should doubt whether he derived much benefit from the lectures. A systematic outline of the principles of our municipal system he could have appreciated and made his own; but the consideration of a thousand minor details was little to his taste, and ill adapted to

his peculiar talents. He possessed no hair-splitting fineness of intellectual perception. Besides, although his acquired habits of thought would have allowed him to take sufficient interest in the study of law to be at the pains of learning what it was, and discovering the turn of mind which would enable a man to succeed in it, he wanted the faculties and tastes which make a successful lawyer. There is therefore every reason to believe that his legal studies resembled those of his own Darsie Latimer, who says of himself, "I attended a weary session at the Scottish law class; a wearier at the civil; and with what excellent advantage, my note-book filled with caricatures of the professors and my fellow-students, is it not yet extant to testify?" Perhaps, too, a passage in the introductory chapter of "The Heart of Mid-Lothian" may be understood to throw some further light upon the author's legal studies. "'And that's all the good you have obtained from three perusals of the commentaries on Scottish Criminal Jurisprudence'" said his companion. "I suppose the learned author little thinks that the facts which his erudition and acuteness have accumulated for the illustration of legal doctrine, might be so arranged as to form a sort of appendix to the half-bound and slipshod volumes of the circulating library." "I'll bet you a pint of claret," said the elder lawyer, "that he will not feel sore at the comparison." Be this, however, as it may, Scott attended the Scots law class for two successive sessions, the civil law class being at that time, on account of the professor's extreme old age, in a state of temporary abeyance.

The moral philosophy class, as it was at that time taught, afforded a more congenial sphere of action to our student, both on account of the studies pursued in it, and of the amiable and highly gifted individual who filled the chair. It would be alien to our present purpose were we here to plunge into an antiquarian discussion respecting the rise and progress of the system of education which obtains at our Scottish universities.

It is extremely doubtful whether any process of training could have imbued Scott with a taste for systematic philosophical inquiry. The natural bent of his mind, confirmed by habit, was to store up information in order to elaborate it into the narrative form. Reflection and speculation were with him mere episodic exertions. And such a turn of mind found encouragement in the tendency of Dugald Stewart's prelections. He learned to look beyond the mere outward form and actions of men, to recognise their peculiar turns of mind, and all the shifting play of freak, whim, and wayward affection. It was not in the class alone that Scott was exposed to the influence of his teacher's amiable and desultory habits of thought. He was introduced into familiar intercourse with his family, partly as the nephew of a brother professor,

partly through his long established intimacy with the family of Dr. Ferguson. Stimulated by this intercourse, he took an active part in the business of the class, as is apparent from a reminiscence of the venerable author of "A Father's Gift to his Children." "I had no particular intimacy with Sir Walter, but I attended Dugald Stewart's Moral Philosophy class along with him. One of the exercises imposed upon the students, was the writing of essays, which were delivered to the professor, and afterwards criticised by him publicly in the class. Scott composed one at least, and the title was 'On the Manners and Customs of the Northern Nations of Europe.' I remember Mr. Stewart saying of this essay :—'The author of that paper shows much knowledge of the subject, and great taste for such research and information.' In general the professor criticised the essays without mentioning the names of the writers, but I knew this one to be Scott's because he told me."

It is the misfortune of such a system as Stewart's, that every hearer seizes upon the fragment which strikes his fancy to the neglect of all the rest. Scott's previous course of reading, we are led to infer from this anecdote, led him to find most interest in the portion of the lectures devoted to the exposition of the growth of civil society. His historical studies rendered it the most intelligible to him, and in it he found a principle which breathed a living soul into his hitherto desultory studies, and gave the results, form and consistency. We shall hereafter have occasion to note the impression left upon his mind by the new trains of thought thus suggested to him. At present we turn to his exertions in the debating society of which he had enrolled himself a member—not the least important part of a Scottish student's academical career.

Scott took his seat in the Speculative Society for the first time on the evening of Tuesday, the 4th of January 1791. He continued a regular attendant on its meetings, and a zealous sharer of its labours, till Tuesday, the 1st December 1795. As his labours in the society were in reality the training to which he subjected himself by way of preparation for the real duties of life, it will be advisable to present them to the readers as a continued series, although we are by this means subjected to the necessity of passing over some cotemporary events to resume them afterwards. The duty of a member of the Speculative Society then, as now, consisted partly in the cultivation of the arts of eloquence and composition, which is termed the literary, and partly in the management of the society's concerns, which is termed the private business. The latter is perhaps to the full as useful an exercise as the former, inasmuch as it trains young men to the forms and duties of public meetings, which in every free country constitute an important element of the state's executive. The habit of transacting local business in assemblies of the district inhabitants, teaches men to discharge the duties, and to

appreciate the qualifications of the legislator. It is the only sure basis of a representative government. And in a country where assemblies of this kind perform so important a function as in our own, the habits taught in the half-serious business of debating societies are invaluable.

The Speculative Society was not so brilliant in Scott's day as at the time when Brougham, Jeffrey, and Horner trained their young genius within its walls; a period when the jealousy of all discussion, which was the epidemic of the moment, exalted it to an unnatural importance. There were, however, even then among its numbers some who have since distinguished themselves at the bar and in the church. In the latter years Jeffrey was a member, and within these walls was laid the foundation of that mutual respect and friendship between Scott and him, which not even the keenness of political partisanship could extinguish.

The share taken by Scott in the literary business of the society deserves to be recorded, as showing the subjects on which his mind at that time dwelt with interest. Every member is expected, in the course of his attendance, before he is admitted to extraordinary privileges, to read three essays. By the routine of the society, Scott ought to have delivered his first essay on the 20th of March 1791; he applied, however, to the society to allow a substitute to discharge the duty for him, and had his request granted. Whether this evasion was prompted by indolence or diffidence we have no means of ascertaining; but early in the succeeding session he must have mustered courage to face his young friends in the capacity of critics. On the 28th of November 1791, he read an essay "On the origin of the feudal system." The subject is closely connected with that upon which he had chosen to exercise his powers of composition in Professor Stewart's class. On the 14th of February, 1792, he again came forward; and his topic on this occasion was, "The authenticity of the poems of Ossian." This subject leads us to infer that in his other essays he had viewed the Scandinavians and the feudal system more with the eye of a poet than of a lawyer. The followers of Fingal, and the bold barons of a later age, excited a kindred interest in his bosom. It is to be regretted that no trace has remained of the manner in which he treated the claims of Ossian to be admitted a denizen of the realm of entities, as in future life he seems sedulously to have avoided committing himself on the question. On the 11th of December 1792, he read an essay "On the origin of the Scandinavian mythology." On the 3d of April 1793, he again read his essay "On the authenticity of Ossian's poems."

When we view the subjects of these essays in connection with his previous habits of antiquarian study, and also with his subsequent publication of the *Border Minstrelsy*, it is apparent that his predilection for dwelling with fondness on the rude Herculean figures of the olden time

was already confirmed. The warlike achievements of the ancient Celtic and Teutonic races, and their cherished superstitions, were the themes upon which he loved to linger. These do not seem, however, to have been the sole occupants of his mind. The questions debated in the society were necessarily of a more tangible nature, and more modern interest. In their discussion he took an active part. A list of the questions upon which he spoke in the society is subjoined, together with the date of the discussion of each.

- 18th Jan. 1791. "Ought any permanent support to be permitted to the poor?"
- 25th Jan. — "Ought there to be an established religion?"
- 8th Feb. — "Is attainer and corruption of blood ever a proper punishment?"
- 15th Feb. — "Ought the public expenses to be defrayed by levying the amount immediately from the people? or is it expedient to contract national debt for that purpose?"
- 1st March, — "Was the putting of Charles I. to death justifiable?"
- 15th March, — "Should the slave trade be abolished?"
- 13th March, 1792. "Has the belief in a future state been of advantage to mankind? or is it likely ever to be so?"
- 4th Dec. — "Is it for the interest of Great Britain to maintain what is called the balance of Europe?"
- 18th Dec. — "Was the death of Charles I. justifiable?"
- 8th Jan. 1793. "Ought divorces by mutual consent to be allowed?"
- 22d Jan. — "Ought there to be an established religion in this or any other country?"
- 5th Feb. — "Can a national debt promote the prosperity of a country?"
- 12th Feb. — "Ought there to be any poor-rates in a country?"
- 5th March, — "Ought impress warrants to be issued in a free state?"
- 19th March, — "Is the personal inviolability of the chief magistrate in a monarchical government, capable of becoming hostile to the liberties of the people?"
- 26th Nov. — "Ought any crime to be punished with death?"
- 4th Feb. 1794. "Whether a parliamentary reform would not be improper at the present period?"
- 17th Feb. 1775. "Is mercy incompatible with strict law?"

This list serves at least to show what the questions were which at that time occupied the mind of Scott and the young men of his own age

with whom he mingled. It is scarcely to be regretted that the side which he adopted in these debates has not been recorded. He was of an age at which few settled opinions are formed, and when young men feel most pleasure in endeavouring to show their parts, by making the worse appear the better reason. The opinions which he avowed on three occasions have however come down to us. He maintained that a national debt can promote the prosperity of a country, and that mercy is incompatible with justice. On another occasion he argued against the expediency of divorce by mutual consent. It may also be remarked, that the discussion of the death of Charles I. by the society, was in consequence of his suggestion. His orations were in all probability as *jeune* as those of other young debaters: his delivery is said to have been characterised by gentleness and good humour.

However active the part which he took in the literary discussions of the society, that which he took in its private business was still more so. On the 18th of January 1791, the night of his third appearance among them, he was appointed librarian. On the 26th of November in the same year, he was chosen secretary, to which office the discharge of the duties of treasurer was then attached. These various functions he continued to discharge with unrelaxed assiduity till the 1st of December 1795, when he resigned on the ground that, "owing to his other avocations, it was out of his power to retain any longer the offices of secretary and librarian." From the time of his appointment to the secretaryship, till his demission, he regularly extended the minutes of each meeting with his own hand. The writing is at first a sprawling scrawl, which, as we turn over the leaves, contracts into the firm compact hand which he retained almost to the last. His spelling, however, is extremely incorrect. A subject of debate, recommended to the society by himself, is thus entered:—"Ought the king to have the unlimited power of creating *piers*?" On a subsequent occasion a gentleman is stated to have read an essay on "*Ironical Parliaments.*" *Society, privilege, publick*, and the like, are of frequent occurrence.

Another branch of his regular duties was to deliver and receive back the books borrowed by members from the library, to make annual reports respecting the state in which it was, and to carry into effect the orders of the society for the purchase of books. In his capacity of treasurer, he was called upon to collect all the moneys due to the society, to make the necessary disbursements, and to lay, at the commencement of every winter session, an accurate statement of accounts before the members. But his financial duties were rendered more delicate and complicated, by the fact of his predecessor having been in arrears to the society at the time of leaving office, to the amount of 65*l*. Those who have had experience, can tell how difficult it is in a society

possessing no source of income beyond the very slender entry-money, and annual contributions of the members, and occasional fines, to meet even the unavoidable current outlay. Yet Scott managed so well, that on his quitting office at the commencement of the session 1795-96, the outstanding debts of the society only exceeded the funds immediately available by 17*l.*, and the annual contributions of members had not at that time been paid up.

The only other services, beyond his usual routine duties which it fell to Scott as office-bearer to perform, were the management of a correspondence with the Historical Society of Dublin, an affiliated association, which, having quarreled with the heads of the "Silent Sister," had re-organised itself without the college walls; and the preparation of a certificate for a French gentleman, who, having incurred the suspicion of his government on account of a temporary residence in Great Britain, was forced to collect evidence for the purpose of showing that he had the whole time been busily engaged in the prosecution of his studies.

Scott tells us in one of his works, that his principal aim at this period of his life, was to qualify himself for rising in the profession of the law. The love of literary distinction had for a time been hushed to slumber. And certainly the experiment instituted and persevered in for four years in the Speculative Society, establishes most satisfactorily, that he possessed in no common degree that power of steady and persevering exertion which seldom fails to raise even men of *mediocre* talents to eminence. Whether his extreme industry were not increased in some measure by the watchful control of his father, anxious to train him to habits of business, or in a great degree owing to a yielding good-natured disposition, unable to refuse an undue share of labour imposed upon him by more volatile and indolent companions, is uncertain. That his temper was highly conciliatory, we know; for every person who came into contact with him liked him. A lady, whom we have already had occasion to quote more than once, says that he was at this time occasionally full of drollery, and occasionally very dull; adding, that he seemed to her to want spirit. An impression of the same kind seems to have won for him such feelings on the part of all his associates, as express themselves in the following anecdote. When Dr. Baird was elevated to the dignity of Principal of the University of Edinburgh in 1793, the Speculative Society, of which he was a member, gave him a dinner. When the evening was somewhat advanced, the gentleman who had presided on the occasion withdrew, and the secretary was by the unanimous acclaim of the sturdier convivialists called to fill the vacant chair. "He *hirpled* towards it," says our informant, "in his usual quiet way, and only remarked before he sat down, that he was not the first man who had been called upon to fill a place of which he was not

worthy. The unintentional blow struck home, and was received with bursts of laughter. But there were higher capacities fermenting beneath the tranquil surface of his unobtrusive cheerfulness."

In the minute-book of the Faculty of Advocates, (we now return to take up our dropped loops, as a knitter would say,) the following entry occurs under the date 11th June, 1791 :—"The faculty considered the petition for Mr. Walter Scott, son of Mr. Walter Scott, writer to the signet, Mr. — Guthrie —, Mr. William Clerk, son of John Clerk of Eldin, Esq., presented to the Lords of Council and Session, praying that they might be remitted by their Lordships to the Dean and Faculty of Advocates, to take trial of their skill in law in the ordinary way, and to report. They did by their several ballottings authorise the Dean of Faculty to remit the petitioners to the private examiners on the civil law, to take trial of their skill in law, and to report." The Mr. William Clerk named in this minute is the same gentleman we have already had occasion to mention, as a member of the German class commemorated by Scott. It was from him that Scott, not many years after the period to which we now refer, learned the anecdote of Bill Jones, out of which Lewis manufactured one of his "Tales of Terror."

Little more than a year later, we find the following entry :—"Edinburgh, 10th July, 1792. \* \* \* Mr. Walter Scott, son of Mr. Walter Scott, writer to the signet, was publicly examined on Tit. and found sufficiently qualified. The Faculty recommended him to the Dean, to assign him a law out of the above title, for the subject of his discourse to the Lords and the Faculty." The name of the title is left blank in the original. The Hon. Henry Erskine was at that time Dean of Faculty. It is to his memory that Scott has paid the most pathetic tribute, (with perhaps the single exception of Charles Lamb's prose monody on his brother, in his "Dream Children,") that ever was whispered from the shadowy region, where the lands of fiction and reality meet. We allude to a passage in his *Chronicles of the Canon-gate*, of which the manner of his own death has since enhanced the melancholy interest, where he makes the paralytic lawyer struggle to describe him as "the wittiest and the best humoured man living." But this gentleman, whose memory his friends regard with an enthusiasm bordering on idolatry, was not the person to be tied down to the strict observance of formal routine. There are many such *lacunæ* as the above, in the minutes which it was his duty, as perpetual president of the Faculty, to revise and authenticate with his signature. Unluckily, too, the Thesis, or printed Latin discourse, which every candidate for admission to the Faculty distributes among its members, previous to his public examination, is not to be found among the series preserved in the Advocates' Library; and but for the attention of a friend we should not



have been able to place upon record, that the subject of discussion, selected for the purpose of testing the information of the *Intrant*, (so a candidate for admission to the honours of the long robe is technically designated in Scotland,) was the twenty-fourth title of the forty-eighth book of Justinian's Pandects.

The whole ceremony of the composition and distribution of the thesis is, and has been so far back as the memory of man reaches, a mere farce. It is very rarely the composition of the person whose name it bears. It would be unfair, therefore, to hold Scott responsible for this brief medley of indifferent Latin and common-place truisms. What could be said of a title treating of so important a matter as the "disposal of the bodies of criminals" in a state of society which had no analogy with that in which the commentator lived? The only passage worthy of being held in remembrance, and that simply because it indicates that Scott had already enlisted under the banners of the political party, to which he afterwards so firmly adhered, is a line in the dedication to Lord Braxfield, complimenting his lordship for his zeal "in restoring and vindicating the rights of the oppressed." This was a bold stretch of imagination.

Unluckily no authentic record has been preserved of the young advocate's deportment, while assuming the hat in presence of the assembled judges, or while sitting consequential, and timid, yet amused at the breakfast-table of the witty dean. The memory of the festival which celebrated his investiture with the gown has perished from the memory of men. And as to the sober business details of his professional career, they belong more properly to the province of the next chapter, where the reader will find them. He has occasionally, however, thrown out in his writings hints of the favourite avocations of the young lawyers of his day, one or two of which may be cited, to give an idea of the associates by whom he now found himself surrounded. At the Scottish bar there has always been a due proportion of young men of fortune, who never seriously looked for business. Chrystal Croftangry, Esq. thus incidentally describes those of Scott's younger days:—"Of the earlier part of my life it is only necessary to say, that I swept the boards of the parliament house with the skirts of my gown, for the usual number of years, during which young lairds were in my time expected to keep term—got no fees—laughed and made others laugh—drank claret at Bayle's, Fortune's, and Walker's—and eat oysters in the Covenant close." In the introduction to the *Heart of Mid-Lothian*, we find the young lawyer who aspired to business described with "the new novel most in repute lying on his table,—snugly entrenched, however, beneath Stair's Institutes, or an open volume of Morison's Decisions;" and going about with his pockets full of "old play-bills, letters requesting a

meeting of the Faculty, rules of the Speculative Society, syllabus of lectures—all the miscellaneous contents of a young advocate's pocket, which contains every thing but briefs and bank-notes." Whoever wishes to get further insight into Sir Walter's reminiscences of his "walking the boards," may consult Redgauntlet.

Scott assumed the gown only a few days before the close of the summer session of the year 1792; and not long afterwards, he set out on a pretty extensive tour through the Highlands. He entered the mountainous region through the county of Stirling, where he seems to have paid a visit to the venerable father of Sir Ralph Abercromby. At least he has himself told us that from that gentleman he learned in 1793 an anecdote of his early life, which seems to have made a lasting impression on him. It is to this effect:—"When Mr. Abercromby of Tullibody first settled in Stirlingshire, his cattle were repeatedly driven off by the celebrated Rob Roy, or some of his gang; and at length he was obliged, after obtaining a proper safe-conduct, to make the cateran such a visit as that of Waverley to Bean Lean. Rob received him with much courtesy, and made many apologies for the accident, which must have happened, he said, by some mistake. Mr. Abercromby was regaled with collops from two of his own cattle, which were hung up by the heels in the cavern, and was dismissed in perfect safety, after having agreed to pay in future a small sum of black mail, in consideration of which Rob Roy not only undertook to forbear his herds in future, but to place any that should be stolen from him by other freebooters. Mr. Abercromby said, Rob Roy affected to consider him as a friend to the Jacobite interest, and a sincere enemy to the union. Neither of these circumstances were true; but the laird thought it quite unnecessary to undeceive his Highland host, at the risk of bringing on a political dispute in such a situation."

Scott's route seems after this visit to have led him up through the strath of Monteith to Loch Katrine, and thence down upon Loch Lomond. Between these two celebrated sheets of water is situated the Fort of Inversnaid, built originally to bridle the restless freebooter Rob Roy. It was at the close of the civil war 1745-46 repaired and strengthened; and was at one time commanded by the gallant Wolfe. A more pacific age, however, had arrived, as is strikingly exemplified from the following memorial by Scott, of the condition in which he found the fortress. "About 1792, when the author chanced to pass that way, while on a tour through the Highlands, a garrison, consisting of a single veteran, was still maintained at Inversnaid. The venerable warder was reaping his barley croft in all peace and tranquillity; and when we asked admittance to repose ourselves, he told us we would find the key of the fort under the door." His further progress we cannot trace with

perfect accuracy, but he seems to have taken a wide sweep through the centre of the Highlands, as we next find him a visitant of the minister of Dunnottar. The year to which the extract we are about to lay before our readers refers, is indeed vaguely indicated, but in another place, (the original preface to the *Chronicles of the Canongate*,) it is fixed in the year 1792. "It is about thirty years since, or more, that the author met with this singular person, (Old Mortality,) in the churchyard of Dunnottar, when spending a day or two with the late learned and excellent clergyman, Mr. Walker, the minister of that parish, for the purpose of a close examination of the ruins of the castle of Dunnottar, and other subjects of antiquarian research in the neighbourhood. Old Mortality chanced to be at the same place, on the usual business of his pilgrimage; for the castle of Dunnottar, though lying in the anti-covenanting district of the Mearns, was, with the parish churchyard, celebrated for the oppressions sustained there by the Cameronians in the time of James II."

After a short digression, the narrative proceeds thus:—"It was while I was listening to this story, and looking at the monument referred to, that I saw Old Mortality engaged in his daily task of cleaning and repairing the ornaments and epitaphs upon the tomb. His appearance and equipment were exactly as described in the novel. I was very desirous to see something of a person so singular, and expected to have done so, as he took up his quarters with the hospitable and liberal-spirited minister. But though Mr. Walker invited him up after dinner to partake of a glass of spirits and water, to which he was supposed not to be very averse, yet he would not speak frankly upon the subject of his occupations. He was in bad humour, and had, according to his phrase, no freedom for conversation with us.

"His spirit had been sorely vexed, by hearing in a certain Aberdonian kirk the psalmody directed by a pitch-pipe, or some similar instrument, which was to Old Mortality the abomination of abominations. Perhaps, after all, he did not feel himself at ease with his company; he might suspect the questions asked by a north-country minister and a young barrister to savour more of idle curiosity than profit. At any rate, in the phrase of John Bunyan, Old Mortality went on his way, and I saw him no more."

There are circumstances which lead us to believe that it was on this occasion Scott paid a visit to the castle of Glamis, the seat of the Earl of Strathmore, and honoured by having been the scene of a friendly meeting between Gray and Beattie. A little anecdote which Scott has preserved, respecting his visit to this ancient pile, is rendered doubly interesting by the light which it throws upon his feelings at this time, in regard to supernatural intercourse. Many foolish stories have got into circulation respecting Scott's superstition. This is a theme upon which

we shall be obliged to expatiate, when we come to speak of his prose works. Let it suffice to remark here, that he seems to us to have had even less of that weakness in his constitution than most men. He is fond of lingering on the theme, but it is after the manner of a man coolly investigating the particulars of a strange and improbable story. Even when using it as an ingredient of his poetry, he is apt to spiritualise ghost legends into something approaching to allegory. A moral lurks behind his spectres. Not so Hogg, who, by the mere naiveté of his narrative, communicates to the most inconsequential dreams of second childhood the power of making the hair to bristle. Scott possessed an iron frame, and had, moreover, been initiated into the metaphysical school of Reid, which is too fond of experimenting with the senses to leave any of their delusions unexplained.

“I have been myself, at two periods of my life distant from each other, engaged in scenes favourable to that degree of superstitious awe, which my countrymen expressively call being *erie*. On the first of these occasions, I was only nineteen or twenty years old, when I happened to pass a night in the magnificent old baronial castle of Glamis, the hereditary seat of the Earl of Strathmore. The heavy pile contains much in its appearance, and in the traditions connected with it, impressive to the imagination. It was the scene of the murder of a Scottish king of great antiquity; not, indeed, the gracious Duncan, with whom the name naturally associates itself, but Malcolm the Second. It contains also a curious monument of the peril of feudal times, being a secret chamber, the entrance of which, by the law or custom of the family, must only be known to three persons at once, viz., the Earl of Strathmore, his heir-apparent, and any third person they may take into their confidence. The extreme antiquity of the building is vouched by the thickness of the walls, and the wild straggling arrangement of the accommodation within doors. As the late Earl of Strathmore seldom resided in that ancient mansion, it was, when I was there, but half furnished, and that with moveables of great antiquity, which, with the pieces of chivalric armour hanging upon the walls, greatly contributed to the general effect of the whole. After a very hospitable reception from the late Peter Procter, then seneschal of the castle, in Lord Strathmore's absence, I was conducted to my apartment in a distant corner of the building. I must own, that as I heard door after door shut, after my conductor had retired, I began to consider myself too far from the living, and somewhat too near the dead. We had passed through what is called ‘the king's room,’ a vaulted apartment, garnished with stag's antlers and similar trophies of the chase, and said by tradition to be the spot of Malcolm's murder, and I had an idea of the vicinity of the castle chapel.

"In spite of the truth of history, the whole night-scene in *Macbeth's* castle rushed at once upon my mind, and struck my mind more forcibly than even when I have seen its terrors represented by the late John Kemble and his inimitable sister. In a word, I experienced sensations, which, though not remarkable either for timidity or superstition, did not fail to affect me to the point of being disagreeable, while they were mingled at the same time with a strange and indescribable sort of pleasure, the recollection of which affords me gratification at this moment."\*

From this excursion the young lawyer returned in time to make his *debut* at the Jedburgh circuit. He was anxious to obtain an opportunity of displaying his forensic skill; but his anxiety to make himself acquainted with the country and inhabitants was still greater. He was now touching upon those rude countries which intervene betwixt the fertile Merse where much of his boyish life had been spent, and the most northern districts of England. He was anxious to penetrate into the recesses of those hills with whose rude traditions he was so familiar. In such a mood he was walking on the streets of Jedburgh, canvassing with a proprietor from the neighbourhood the most expedient mode of accomplishing an excursion into Teviotdale, when Mr. Robert Shortreed, sheriff-depute of the county, passed them. "There's just your man," said Scott's friend, and proceeded to introduce the two lawyers to each other in due form. Mr. Shortreed was not only able and willing to aid the young stranger in his projected excursion; his official situation enabled him to introduce his new friend to one or two of those unfortunate culprits whose destiny it is to pass to their final doom through the purgatory of affording young barristers the same opportunity of acquiring practical knowledge that young medical men derive from infirmity patients. And the friendship thus auspiciously commenced was a lasting one, for from that day, whenever Scott had occasion to visit Jedburgh, Shortreed's house was his home.

The debutant had reason to be satisfied with the issue of his first trial. The evening before the court sat he had as usual an interview

\* Sir Walter has, in his notes to *Waverley*, communicated one of his own exploits in his Castle of Glammis, whether performed on this or some subsequent occasion, it is impossible to determine. "The *Poculum Potatorium* of the valiant baron, his Blessed Bear, has a prototype at the fine old Castle of Glammis, so rich in memorials of the ancient times; it is a massive beaker of silver, double gilt, moulded into the shape of a lion, and holding about an English pint of wine. The form alludes to the family name of Strathmore, which is Lyon, and when exhibited, the cup must necessarily be emptied to the earl's health. The author ought perhaps to be ashamed of recording that he had the honour of swallowing the contents of the lion; and the recollection of the feat served to suggest the story of the Bear of Bradwardine."

with his respectable client in the jail. To Shortreed's inquiry on his return what was his opinion of the case, he replied, "Guilty, by G—d!" Next day, however, by some of those unaccountable turns which at times occur in judicial proceedings, the evidence for the crown broke down, and the jury acquitted the culprit. With a pardonable degree of triumph in an unfledged lawyer, Scott addressed his friend, "Not ill done that, to get off such a blackguard!"

Full of the buoyant spirits of one and twenty, with a body strengthened by his addiction to athletic exercises, and a heart triumphing in the success of his first circuit, he set out with his worthy host to explore the recess of Teviotdale and Liddesdale. The character of the district into which he now penetrated for the first time, will be best understood from the account he has himself given of it. "The roads of Liddesdale, in Dandie Dinmont's day, could not be said to exist, and the district was only accessible through a succession of tremendous morasses. About thirty years ago," (at a much later period than that of which we are now speaking,) "the author himself was the first person who drove a little open carriage into these wilds; the excellent roads by which they are now traversed being then in some progress. The people stared with no small wonder at a sight which many of them had never witnessed in their lives before." The manners and character of the then inhabitants Scott has made so universally known, that it would be vain to attempt a description of them after him.

The friends performed their journey on horseback, Mr. Shortreed riding a gray mare, which recommended itself to the future novelist by its sagacity in crossing mosses and mires, and has since been immortalised under the name of Duple. A characteristic anecdote of their tour used to be related with much glee by Mr. Shortreed. On visiting a person whose name and residence are sufficiently indicated by his usual designation of 'Willie o' Milburn,' the honest farmer was from home, but returned while Scott was tying up his horse in the stable. On being told by Mr. Shortreed that an Edinburgh advocate was come to see him, he expressed great alarm, and even horror as to the character of his visiter, the old fear of the law being still so very rife in Liddesdale, as even to extend to the simple person of any of its administrators. What idea Willie had formed of an Edinburgh lawyer, it might be difficult to conjecture; but having gone out to reconnoitre, he soon returned with a countenance sufficiently radiant to show that his fears had been relieved. "Is yon the advocate?" he inquired of Mr. Shortreed. "Yes, Willie," replied that gentleman. "Deil o' me's feared for them then," cried the farmer; "yon's just a chield like oursels."

The method employed by Scott at this time for riveting on his

memory the local anecdotes and legends which he collected from the individuals with whom he came in contact, was amusing enough. He seized any twig or piece of wood which came to hand, and kept notching it with his clasp knife as the narrator went on. These poetical *tally sticks* he at times intrusted to the charge of his companion; and Mr. Shortreed used to allege, that on one occasion this strange note-book became so bulky, that, in the language of Burns, the pins in his pocket

“ ——— Might serve to mend a mill  
In time o' need.”

The excursion proved so pleasant, that it was repeated every autumn, after the circuit, for many years. These jaunts Scott used playfully to term his *raids* into Liddesdale; in some sort they deserved the name, for he carried back with him precious spoil, the materials of his inimitable narratives.

His determination to qualify himself as a pleader now kept him for the greater part of the year a close resident in Edinburgh. Personal attendance (the mind may ramble whither it will) is rigorously enforced upon every young aspirant after practice at the Scottish bar. Besides, Scott, who had commenced his career under the friendly auspices of the party in power, was resolved to keep himself in their view. His employment in the *outer-house* might not, as he has himself informed us, exceed one opportunity of appearing in behalf of the prototype of Peter Peebles, but he was regularly present in the private meetings of the Faculty, for the purpose of showing that he was determined to be recognised as one of them. The consequence was, that he was soon regarded by the then managers of that body's affairs as a young man of *good principles* and steady habits, and rewarded, accordingly, with that species of patronage which exerts itself to place a beginner in situations which, by making him a little prominent, may give him an excuse for aspiring, on some future occasion, to appointments of real emolument and honour. It is the custom of the Faculty of Advocates to elect their office-bearers annually, in a general meeting held as soon as possible after New-Year's day. These officials, whose duty it is to conduct the general and financial business of their corporation, to superintend the examinations of such as apply to be admitted into it, or to aid in the management of the various charities, a partial control over which has been vested by their founders in the gentlemen of the long robe, are tolerably numerous, and continue in office, as the case may be, for one year only, or are re-elected for a succession of years. One of the few matters of real importance which the Faculty has to attend

to is the management of its extensive and valuable library ; an institution which, in virtue of being one of those entitled to claim a copy of every work entered at Stationers' Hall, may be regarded as one of the national libraries. This collection is intrusted to the care of a librarian, who acts with the advice and under the control of five curators chosen from among the body of advocates. In general, each curator remains in office five years ; he who has completed his time of service resigning at the annual meeting, and having a successor appointed. On the first of June 1795, consequently before Scott had completed his third year at the bar, we find the following entry made in the minutes of the Faculty :—" Mr. Walter Scott was appointed one of the curators of the library in the room of Sir William Miller, (Lord Glenlee,) promoted to the bench."

As it falls within the limits of the period of Scott's life which we are at present recording, it may preserve a kind of continuity in our review of his occupations, to add here, that we find his name entered in the list of curators on the occasion of the annual election which took place on the 18th of January 1796, along with those of Mr. David Hume, Professor of Scots Law, and Mr. Malcolm Laing, the historian. During the course of the same year, a piece of duty incidental to his office was imposed upon him, which must have afforded peculiar gratification to one of his turn of mind, and which may perhaps be received at the same time as a proof of the respect entertained for his acquirements. In the minute-book of the Faculty of Advocates, of date the 5th March 1796, there occurs the following entry. " It having been represented that the cabinet of the medals in the library was in some disorder, it was recommended to Mr. Hodgson Cay and Mr. Walter Scott, two of the present curators of the library, to put the medals in proper arrangement." Another entry, dated the 17th of December 1796, throws some light upon the result of this recommendation. " Mr. H. Cay, one of the curators of the library, represented to the Faculty the important services derived from the knowledge and assiduity of Dr. Kennedy in arranging and classifying the valuable collection of coins belonging to the Faculty, and moved, that in return for his services the faculty confer upon Dr. Kennedy the use of their library. This motion was seconded by Mr. Walter Scott, also one of the curators of the library, and after a good deal of discussion, the consideration of it referred to the curators at large to report to the anniversary meeting." It would appear from this statement, that the curators had found it necessary to call in the assistance of a more skilful practical antiquary. This, however, at least in the case of the more immediate subject of our narrative, is not to be wondered at. Up to the time of this commission, his attention had never been invited to the inspection and appreciation



of medals, a task which requires the combined acquirements of the minute antiquarian and the amateur of art. Nor does he seem at any period to have devoted much attention to this fascinating study. A mind like his, however, could not superintend the labours of Dr. Kennedy without profit, and many allusions occur in his writings to this branch of inquiry; nay, we may not be going too far when we refer to this incident the commencement of his passion for collecting and preserving the relics of antiquity, the earliest recorded example of which it will soon be our task to commemorate.

While these minutes show him to have been as active in the private concerns of the learned body of which he was a member, as his youth admitted of, the records of the high court of judicatory prove that he was endeavouring, at the same time, to struggle professionally into public notice. The penal tribunal of Scotland sits in virtue of a separate commission from that which gives warrant to the proceedings of the court of session. Its forms of administering justice are different, and being comparatively popular, hold out greater attractions to a young man equally desirous of literary and legal eminence. The topics of discussion are also more generally interesting, less technical and repulsive. Lastly, it is a court which offers few temptations to lawyers already possessed of a lucrative business, and is principally abandoned, like a kind of practical school, to those members of the profession who have no better employment. The occasional opportunities it affords for the display of eloquence and ingenuity, the pleasing sense of importance conveyed by the consciousness of having a real case to manage and vague flattering hopes of obtaining the favour of the bench, or (more important still) the agents, conspire to render the court of judicatory a favourite *halle d'armes* of young barristers. We know from the evidence of Mr. Shortreed's family, that Scott was a constant attendant at the Jedburgh circuit, and generally managed to get himself employed in a case or two. The minutes taken at the circuit courts, however, are merely entered in a scroll-book and never extended. They rarely contain the names of the counsel, or any thing that can throw light on the progress of the trial. The forensic efforts of our hero at these perambulatory courts, must therefore sleep in silence. The records of the court of Judicatory during its sittings in Edinburgh are somewhat more specific, and in them the name of Walter Scott appears for the first time on the 14th of July 1795.

A favourite amusement of boys, and such young men as have outgrown the years of boyhood without relinquishing all its tastes, has ever been the firing of pistols, miniature cannons, and such like puny artillery. On the afternoon of the seventeenth June 1795, a young man of the name of James Niven, who, after serving for some time on

board a king's ship, had been discharged in consequence of a wound in his right hand, and was living unemployed with his father, a tobacconist in Edinburgh, loaded and discharged a small iron cannon for the amusement of some of his juvenile associates. According to his own declaration, he put nothing into the tube but some powder, a wadding of paper, and a little tobacco. It so happened however, that on discharging the cannon up Liberton's Wynd, a piece of iron, either rammed down with the rest of the loading, or splintered from the metal by the concussion, struck a man standing before one of the doors, and killed him almost instantaneously. There was no suspicion of a malicious intention on the part of Niven, but the fact of his having discharged fire-arms apparently loaded with an iron bolt along a public street, where people were constantly passing and repassing, argued such a culpable levity and indifference to the lives and safety of others, as induced the public prosecutor to bring up the lad for trial. Singularly enough, the man David Knox, for whose murder this first client of Sir Walter Scott stood arraigned, is described in the indictment as "late doorkeeper to the Faculty of Advocates."

The 14th of July 1795 was appointed for the day of trial, and on that day appeared before Lord Justice Clerk Braxfield and his bench-fellows in equity,—for the crown, Mr. Robert Blair, solicitor-general, and Mr. John Anstruther, one of the depute advocates; for the prisoner, Mr. James Ferguson, and Mr. Walter Scott. Mr. James Ferguson was very little Scott's senior at the bar, and their intimacy had commenced in the Speculative Society. He had, however, by his ambition to attain distinction by his forensic eloquence, already pushed himself into a slight degree of notoriety at the justiciary bar, and under his experienced guidance his more bashful friend ventured his *coup-d'essai*. In the circumstances of the case, it was of the utmost consequence for the party accused to make a stand upon the question whether the facts specified in the libel were in themselves sufficient to infer either murder or the alternative charge of culpable homicide. Arguing a plea of this kind is called in Scotland objecting to the relevancy of the indictment, and the discussion takes place in open court previous to the impanneling of the jury. It fell to Scott, as junior counsel on the occasion, to open the case, which he did with such effect, that the bench deferred pronouncing judgment, and ordained in the mean time, "Parties procurators to give in information upon the foregoing debate to the clerk of court in order to be recorded." It is not our cue to enter upon the particulars of the argument, but as the written information lodged for the accused bears the signature of Walter Scott, it is certainly worth while to lay before our readers such extracts as may

give them a notion of the style and execution of the paper. It is exactly such a production as might have been expected from a young man of superior talents and extensive reading, but inexperienced in business and comparatively new to the practice of composition. There is good sense and clear argument, but occasional redundant displays of law learning sufficient to excite suspicion that it had been picked up for the occasion, and frequent attempts at fine writing. It commences rather clumsily.

#### INFORMATION FOR JAMES NIVEN.

“The pannel, James Niven, in whose behalf the following pages are submitted to your lordships, stands accused of the crime of murder, or at least of culpable homicide, by an indictment, bearing that he having got into his possession a small iron gun or cannon, with iron carriage and wheels, in the afternoon of the seventeenth day of the month of June, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-five, or of one or other of the days of that month, did bring the said small gun or cannon into the workshop of Ebenezer Wilson, founder in Liberton’s Wynd, in the city of Edinburgh, and did there load said gun or cannon with powder, a wadding of paper, some tobacco, and a piece of iron resembling in appearance part of a small bolt or large screw-nail, and having so loaded the said gun or cannon, he carried it out and placed it on a step of the stair, at the gate leading into the house of Robert Playfair, Writer in Liberton’s Wynd aforesaid, and pointed the muzzle in a direction up the said Wynd; that David Knox, late doorkeeper to the Faculty of Advocates, was standing in said Wynd in conversation with Mrs. Helen Douglas, relict of James Baillie, late of Olive Bank, and was then within a very few yards of the stair above described, and when the mouth of said gun was pointed directly towards the said David Knox and Mrs. Helen Douglas, he (the pannel) did wickedly and feloniously, or at least culpably, fire off the same, in consequence of which the said David Knox was killed almost instantaneously.

“The prisoner having been brought to the bar, pleaded not guilty to the above accusation, and in his defence the following facts were shortly stated by his counsel:—

“That the pannel was a young lad who had served some time on board his majesty’s ships, the Hector and London; in which service he had conducted himself with sobriety and attention to his duty, till his hand having been disabled by an accident, he was dismissed as incapable of further service. It may not be here improper to insert an answer received by the pannel’s agent to a letter addressed to the sur-

geon or lieutenant of the said ships, as evidence of what was then stated."

(The letter is inserted and the paper continues.)

"The counsel proceeded to state, that since his return to Edinburgh, he wrought in the work-house of a founder upon Leith Walk, where he purchased the cannon libeled on, from a fellow-workman, with the innocent intention of disposing of it again to advantage, as he considered it worth double or triple the price he paid for it. In the mean time he fired it several times by way of trial or amusement in Liberton's Wynd, without being challenged by any one whatever, and did so on the 17th of June, having previously loaded it with some paper and tobacco, which he rammed home with an iron bolt or screw-nail taken up by chance in the shop of Ebenezer Wilson, founder, on which he struck several blows with a hammer.

"If in consequence of the shot which he then discharged, the fatal accident happened, it was urged he could not possibly be made liable for it, because, in the first place, he did not know Mr. Knox, and could have no malice against him, nor did he observe either the deceased or any other person in the wynd when he fired; and, in the second place, he conceived the contents of the piece to be perfectly harmless. The only possible way, therefore, by which the accident can be accounted for, is by supposing that a splinter of the bolt which the pannel used as a ramrod had unfortunately remained in the cannon without the pannel's knowledge; and this is the more probable, as he had struck it down with a hammer in order to increase the report.

"Answers having been made to these defences on the part of the crown, your lordships conceiving the case attended with some nicety, were pleased to order informations. In obedience to that interlocutor this paper is humbly submitted on the part of the pannel, of which it will be the object to show, that the statement of facts, even as narrated in the libel, is altogether insufficient to bear out the charge of murder; and, 2dly, That even that of culpable homicide will be completely elided, if the pannel shall be able to establish the defences above narrated. In other words:—first, the relevancy of the libel, and then that of the defence, will be considered. It is true that the latter part of the case seems not to have been considered by the learned gentleman who drew the information for the crown, his observations being confined to what is stated in the libel, without entering into the question how far the pannel's defences can be admitted to qualify or alleviate its conclusions. It is presumed, however, that the libel and defences are both before the court, and therefore are with equal propriety subjects of argument in the informations. This indeed is illustrated

by the ancient practice of the court, whose special interlocutors of relevancy used to respect the defences as well as the libel. With some preliminary observations, requesting, at the same time, the indulgence of the court if the plan is irregular, the pannel's counsel shall proceed to state the general argument on these separate points, with such authorities as seem in point.

“Murder, or the wilful premeditated slaughter of a citizen, is a crime of so deep and scarlet a dye, that there is scarce a nation to be found in which it has not, from the earliest period, been deemed worthy of a capital punishment. ‘He who sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed,’ is a general maxim which has received the assent of all times and countries. But it is equally certain, that even the rude legislatures of former days soon perceived, that the death of one may be occasioned by another, without the slayer himself being the proper object of the *lex talionis*. Such an accident may happen either by the carelessness of the killer, or through that excess and vehemence of passion to which humanity is incident. In either case, though blamable, he ought not to be confounded with the cool and deliberate assassin, and the species of criminality attaching itself to those acts has been distinguished by the term *dolus*, in opposition to the milder term *culpa*. Again, there may be a third species of homicide, in which the perpetrator being the innocent and unfortunate cause of casual misfortune, becomes rather an object of compassion than punishment. There is a fourth kind of man-slaughter, performed in the execution of duty or in self-defence. But this our present subject does not lead us to consider. We shall, therefore, limit our views to the three first, distinguished already as felonious, culpable, and casual. It will be our object to prove, first, that should the libel be proved in its utmost extent, still it can only authorise the alternative conclusion, viz. that the pannel has been guilty of culpable homicide; and, secondly, That taking, on the other hand, the qualifying defences as granted, the facts will be mitigated into casual or accidental manslaughter, to which the law of Scotland attaches no punishment.

“Upon the first branch, arguing, viz. *ex facie* of the libel, the main argument has been stated at the bar, viz. that there was no *dolus* or *animus occidenali* in the pannel’s mind at the time of the action, which is an essential ingredient in the crime of murder. *Animus enim et propositum maleficia distinguuntur et in delictis animus attenditur non autem exitus.* To this it has been answered on the part of the crown, that in various cases no malice against any particular individual is required, where the action is of a nature plainly pregnant with danger to some one or other of the human species, and would be committed only by a lunatic or some singular monster meriting the title of *hostis humani*

*generis*, which would be the appellation due to a man who should fire a loaded gun among a crowd of people, or be guilty of any similar act of barbarity. Or, perhaps, the most proper instance is what is told of the Malay gamester, who, when rendered desperate by his losses, rushes out into the streets, stabbing whoever comes in his way till he is overpowered and killed like a wild beast.

"It is, however, contended, that the action of the pannel falls under this alternative, first, from the nature of the weapon made use of; secondly, from its position in a public wynd or close. Upon these two circumstances the pursuer builds the judicial presumption, that this poor lad was wicked enough totally to disregard the lives of his fellow-citizens, and in the pursuit of a very frivolous amusement, to exhibit a wanton barbarity worthy of a Marat or a Carrier."

The paper next proceeds to argue the presumptions in favour of the prisoner, arising from the instrument employed being a mere toy contrived for amusement, and from the direction of the muzzle having been horizontal, although the piece was placed in front of a rapid ascent, citing in support of these views an immense array of English and Roman authorities. This part of the case is handled at great length, but the only passages worthy of notice are those in which he adverts to the personal character of his client, and glances at the doctrine of minor punishments.

The description of the prisoner is introduced with considerable tact and dexterity. "Admitting there may have been a certain degree of culpability in the pannel's conduct, still there is one circumstance which pleads strongly in his favour, so as to preclude all presumption of *dole*. This is the frequent practice, whether proper or improper, of using this amusement in the streets. It is a matter of public notoriety, that boys of all ages and descriptions are, or at least till the late very proper proclamation of the magistrates, were to be seen every evening in almost every corner of the city, amusing themselves with firearms and small cannons, and that without being checked or interfered with. When the pannel, a poor ignorant raw lad, lately discharged from a ship of war, certainly not the most proper school to learn a prudent aversion to unlucky or mischievous practices, observed the sons of gentlemen of the first respectability engaged in such amusements, unchecked by their parents or by the magistrates, surely it can hardly be expected that he should discover that in imitating them in so common a practice, he was constituting himself *hostis humani generis*, a wretch the pest and scourge of mankind."

The sentiment here insinuated is as just as it is beautiful, and what follows is no less true or worthy of note. "It is true that no dangerous pastimes ought to be allowed in a city; but the question occurs

here, how are they to be stopped? Certainly not by punishing with death the thoughtless wretch, who, in prosecution of an amusement hitherto unchecked, shall first be stained with the blood of a human being. This would be equally harsh towards the individual and ineffectual towards the public. Harsh to the individual, because he was only doing what was done by a thousand before him, and with as little intention of harm as they whose diversion had not been attended with the same fatal consequences; and useless to the public, because such practices are not to be checked by a single instance of extreme severity, the opportunity of exercising which may not occur once in a century, but by an extreme attention to police, and to the distribution of lesser punishments proportioned to such transgressions thereof as, if they are not usually, may at least, in some instances, be fatal to the inhabitants."

Turning to the second branch of his subject, the pleader proceeds in these terms:—

"Having now shown that supposing the libel to be proved to its utmost extent, the charge against the pannel amounts to culpable homicide only, and having fortified this doctrine by authorities drawn from the Roman, English, and Scotch books of jurisprudence, it remains to show how far a proof of the defences stated for the pannel will alleviate the charge even of culpable homicide, and soften it into manslaughter *per infortuniam*.

"These defences, it will be recollected, consisted chiefly in a denial that the pannel knew there was any thing in the gun capable of doing mischief. In these circumstances, it is apprehended there was little blame to be attributed to the pannel for not foreseeing or providing against an accident so uncommon and so extraordinary as that which occasioned the fatal catastrophe. There is no doubt attached to every, even the most innocent of casual slaughter, a certain degree of blame, inasmuch as almost every thing of the kind might have been avoided had the slayer exhibited the strictest degree of diligence. A well known and authentic story will illustrate the proposition. A young gentleman just married to a young lady of *which* [*sic in orig.*] he was passionately fond, in affectionate trifling presented at her a pistol, of which he had drawn the charge some days before. The lady, entering into the joke, desired him to fire: he did so, and shot her dead; the pistol having been charged by his servant without his knowledge. Can any one read this story, and feel any emotion but that of sympathy towards the unhappy husband? Can they ever connect the case with an idea of punishment? Yet, divesting it of these interesting circumstances which act upon the imagination, it is precisely that of the pannel at your lordship's bar; and though no one will pretend to say that such a homicide is other than casual, yet there is not the slightest question

but it might have been avoided had the killer taken the precaution of examining his piece. But this is not the degree of *culpa* which can raise a misfortune to the pitch of a crime. It is only an instance that no accident can take place without its afterwards being discovered that the chief actor might have avoided committing it had he been gifted with the spirit of prophecy, or with such an extreme degree of prudence as is almost equally rare. It is therefore sufficient to justify the slayer from the crime of culpable homicide, that he has not been guilty of the gross negligence called by lawyers *culpa lata*, which forms the essence of homicide, as *dolus* does that of murder."

After quoting some English and Scottish authorities, he resumes: "In all or most of the amusements here mentioned it is obvious that, in order to occasion a fatal catastrophe, there must have been some greater or lesser negligence on the part of the killer. In the instance of shooting at butts, or at a bird, the person killed must have been somewhat in the line previous to the discharge of the shot, otherways it could never have come near him. The shooter must therefore have been guilty *culpa levis seu levissimae* in firing while the deceased was in such a situation. In like manner, it is difficult to conceive how death should happen in consequence of a boxing or wrestling match without some excess upon the part of the killer. Nay, in the exercise of the martial amusements of our forefathers, even by royal commission, should a champion be slain in running his barriers, or performing his tournament, it could scarcely happen without some *culpa seu levis seu levissima* on the part of his antagonist. Yet all these are enumerated in the English law-books as instances of casual homicide only; and we may therefore safely conclude, that by the law of the sister country a slight degree of the blame will not subject the slayer *per infortunium* to the penalties of culpable homicide."

We pass over the argument founded upon an analogous Scottish case, and subjoin the concluding paragraphs entire.

"It is true that by a singular and unforeseen accident there had remained in the cannon some fragments of the iron bolt with which the charge was rammed home; but as this was without the pannel's knowledge, he was surely in complete *bona fide*, and as innocent of the consequences as he would have been had the fatal accident been occasioned by the bursting of his gun. There may indeed be a *culpa levis* or *levissimi* in his conduct, in so far as it is irregular to fire off gunpowder in the streets of a city, even for amusement only; but this degree of blame, as has been shown, never can heighten the description of a case from casual to culpable homicide. And many important alleviations occur in this instance, considering the pannel's situation,—an ignorant lad, in the lowest rank in life, just come from on board a man-of-war;



and considering also the extreme frequency of the practice, which must often have fallen under your lordships' observation.

"This paper, already perhaps too long, shall now be concluded with the following general observations. Guilt, as an object of punishment, has its origin in the mind and intention of the actor; and therefore, where that is wanting, there is no proper object of chastisement. A madman, for example, can no more properly be said to be guilty of murder than the sword with which he commits it, both being equally incapable of intending injury. In the present case, in like manner, although it ought, no doubt, to be matter of deep sorrow and contrition to the pannel that his folly should have occasioned the loss of life to a fellow-creature; yet as that folly can neither be termed malice, nor yet doth amount to a gross negligence, he ought rather to be pitied than condemned. The fact done can never be recalled, and it rests with your lordships to consider the case of this unfortunate young man, who has served his country in an humble though useful station,—deserved such a character as is given him in the letter of his officers,—and been disabled in that service. You will best judge how (considering he has suffered a confinement of six months) he can in humanity be the object of further or severer punishment, for a deed of which his mind at least, if not his hand, is guiltless. When a case is attended with some nicety, your lordships will allow mercy to incline the balance of justice, well considering, with the legislator of the east, 'It is better ten guilty should escape than that one innocent man should perish in his innocence.'"

On the 21st of December, the judges pronounced "the indictment, in so far as it charges the crime of murder, relevant to infer the pain of death," but allowed "the pannel to prove all facts and circumstances that might lead to exculpate him or alleviate his guilt," and remitted him to "the knowledge of an assize." The ingenuity of the two young counsel succeeded in obtaining from the jury (*Scottice assize*) a verdict of "not guilty," by a plurality of voices.

The "learned brothers," Ferguson and Scott, again appeared in the Court of Justiciary, on the 14th of March, 1796, to unite their efforts in behalf of William Brown, accused of stealing sundry bars of iron from a merchant in Leith. No objections were offered to the relevancy of the indictment on this occasion, and Scott, as junior counsel, had no other duty to perform than that of examining some of the witnesses. They were again successful, the jury finding, by a plurality of voices, the charge not proven.

We have already stated, that from the period of Scott's assuming the gown till the year 1796, his avocations kept him for the greater part of the year a close resident in Edinburgh. His professional studies, and the discharge of his official duties in the Speculative Society, as appears

from what has been stated above, must have occupied a large proportion of his time. His leisure hours were devoted to the amusements of society, of which he partook with all the zest of a sound and healthy constitution. During the vacations of the court he continued to pay regular visits to his friends in Roxburghshire and in Perthshire; making likewise frequent excursions through different parts of Scotland, which seem to have left no trace behind them except in his own susceptible and retentive mind. But notwithstanding these numerous and distracting, if not exactly important avocations, the keenness of his appetite for books continued unabated. He read whatever came in his way—history, poetry, memoirs, romances, travels; incessantly adding to his huge store of miscellaneous information. All this while, however, as he himself has told us, although passionately fond of dwelling upon the compositions of others, he had never dreamed of an attempt to imitate what gave him so much pleasure. But already the fuel was abundantly stored up in the garner of his mind, and the torch was now applied which was to set “the kiln in a lowe.”

His German studies seem to have been prosecuted rather after a desultory fashion till the year 1793 or 1794. In the summer of one or other of these years, while Scott was as usual absent “scouring the cramp ring,” Miss Letitia Aiken (afterwards Mrs. Barbauld) paid a visit to Edinburgh. She was hospitably received by the family of Professor Stewart, at whose house the young advocate was a frequent and welcome visiter. In such a circle, the conversation naturally turned much upon literary topics, in which the elevated, elegant, and accomplished mind of the fair stranger enabled her to take an interested and interesting part. One evening, the new fashion of German literature furnished the theme of discourse; and Miss Aiken, who was in habits of intimate acquaintance with Mr. William Taylor of Norwich, the patriarch of the admirers of the Teutonic muse in this country, took occasion to produce a translation of Burger’s ballad of “Leonore,” which had recently been translated by that gentleman. After reading the verses, she replaced them in her pocket-book, and resisted all the solicitations of her auditors to favour them with a copy.

The ballad poetry of Burger is well qualified to make a powerful impression upon those who hear it for the first time. When it rises to an impassioned strain, it hurries the reader or hearer along with the relentless and unrestrainable speed of the wild horse to which Mazeppa was bound. The fevered imagination pants to keep up with the headlong hurry of the nervous and rushing versification. The author, too, more than any other writer in his own language, so rich in pure and varied vowel sounds, is a master of the art of making “the sound an echo to the sense.” In his amatory and humorous poems, he is at times val-

garly and revoltingly sensual; but when he strikes a higher chord, it is with a bold, masculine, if not a refined, touch. His "Hoch tont das Lied vom braven Mann" vibrates between the stately melody of the deep organ, and the solemn clangour of the cathedral bell. His "Leonore" has all the impetuous onward haste of the spectral steed. It flashes like wildfire along the ghastly path, while above, below, around, shapes of fantastic horror twist and interlace their hideous forms like the creeping, fantastic imagery of a fevered dream. They fill the atmosphere even to stifling, and brush us with their clammy surfaces. Much of this wild imagery, and much even of the untamed rushing of the versification, had been transfused by Mr. Taylor into his translation. No wonder, then, that it made a thrilling and enduring impression upon Miss Aiken's auditors.

Before Scott returned to town, this lady set out for England; but he found all his friends in raptures with her good sense and intelligence, and loud in their praise of the wonderful ballad with which she had made them acquainted. This was a theme which possessed a double attraction for Scott. He piqued himself upon being somewhat of a German scholar, and he was a profound admirer of ballad poetry, and a hunter after every specimen of it that was known to exist. As if to stimulate his curiosity the more, his friends could only furnish him with a meagre and broken account of the story; and the few lines which dwelt in their memory were of a nature calculated to awaken sanguine anticipations:—

Tramp, tramp, along the land they rode,  
 Splash, splash, along the sea;  
 Hurrah, the dead can ride apace!  
 Dost fear to ride with me!

To an admirer of legends of *diables*, and spirited versification, this was a most tantalising morsel.

The young ballad-hunter was inspired with an anxious desire to see the original, a wish which he found it no easy matter to gratify. In the year 1794, German works were rarely exposed for sale in London, and never in Edinburgh. After a considerable time had intervened, a copy of Burger's works was procured for him from Hamburgh, by the exertions of the lady of Hugh Scott, Esq. of Harden, his relative and intimate friend. This lady was of noble German descent, and maintained a correspondence with the land of her nativity. Before the book reached Scott's hands, an event had occurred which, joined to his admiration of its contents, conspired to encourage him to perpetrate the deed of authorship for the first time.

Matthew Gregory Lewis published, in 1795, his romance called "The Monk." This work, which, now that it has lost the attraction of novelty, and that its author's talents, in consequence of his subsequent failure as a poet, are more modestly estimated, is seldom talked of, created an immense sensation at its first appearance. Lewis had not much imagination, but his memory was stored with the wild legends at that time so rife in German literature, and the energy of young feeling lent a spurious energy to the motley patchwork of his fiction, while a warm temperament enabled him to veil behind a luscious drapery of fervid passionate description many of its defects. There can be no doubt that the indelicate passages which formed the chief ground of accusation against "The Monk," after the public began to recover from its first intoxication, were at first its principal charms, and it cannot be denied, that however reprehensible in a moral point of view, they, as breathing more of human feeling than any other passages in the book, approach more nearly to the character of genius. Be this, however, as it may, the work was at first highly popular, not the less that the author was young, a member of parliament, and the son of the under secretary at war, at that time a very lucrative appointment. Lewis was consequently the lion of the day. Charles Fox, induced no doubt in part by the knowledge that the young man's views in politics scarcely harmonised with those entertained by his father, but doubtless in part also by his own natural kindness of disposition, paid him the unusual compliment of crossing the house of commons to congratulate him upon the success of his work. The fashionable circles, always agape after any novelty that promises to relieve the monotony of their trivial routine, seized upon the elegant romance-writer as their own.

It was about this time, while yet wearing his robes of honour in all the gloss of newness, that Lewis became almost a yearly visitor to Scotland, attracted chiefly by his friendship for the noble family of Argyll. Scott was introduced to him during the earliest of these visits, by Lady Charlotte Campbell, (now Bury,) a name not altogether unknown in the literary world. Allan Cunningham has preserved Scott's *naïve* account of his feelings on this important occasion. "Sir Walter told me, the proudest hour of his life was when he was invited to dine with Monk Lewis; he considered it as a sure recognition of his talents; and as he sat down at the table he almost exclaimed with Tamlane—

"He's own'd amang us a'."

Similarity of tastes soon ripened this accidental acquaintance into a sort of intimacy, which served to rekindle that love of rhyme which had now been dormant in Scott's breast for nearly ten years.

One of the chief objects of admiration which the reading public found in "The Monk," was the poetry with which the prose narrative was interspersed. "It has now passed from recollection," says the subject of our narrative, "among the changes of literary taste, but many remember as well as I do, the effect produced by the simple and beautiful ballad of 'Durandarte,' which had the good fortune to be adapted to an air of great beauty and pathos; by the ghost ballad of 'Alonzo and Imogene,' and by several other beautiful pieces of legendary poetry, which addressed themselves, in all the charms of novelty and simplicity, to a public who had for a long time been unused to any regale of the kind. In his poetry as well as his prose, Mr. Lewis had been a successful imitator of the Germans, both in his attachment to the ancient ballad and in the love of superstition which they willingly mingle with it. New arrangements of the stanza, and a varied construction of verses, were also adopted and welcomed as an addition of a new string to the British harp. In this respect the stanza in which 'Alonzo the Brave' is written, was greatly admired, and received as an improvement worthy of adoption into English poetry."

Scott soon discovered, upon farther acquaintance with Lewis, that this admired prodigy was greatly inferior to himself in general information. He recalled to his memory his youthful facility in rhyming, and, to borrow his own expression, "I suddenly took it into my head to attempt the style by which he had raised himself to fame." In this mood the edition of Burger commissioned for him from Hamburg by Mrs. Scott found him on its arrival. The original of "Leonore," he found surpassed even his highly raised expectations. The book had only been a few hours in his possession, when, in his haste to give vent to the delighted sensations it had awakened, he addressed a letter to a friend, in which he gave an animated account of the poem, and promised to furnish him with a translation into English ballad verse. To this self-imposed task he set himself "with right good will," immediately after supper, and he had completed it by day-break next morning, by which time he had succeeded in working himself up into rather an uncomfortable state of excitement.

The success of his attempt induced him to repeat it with some others of Burger's ballads. The friends to whom he communicated the fruits of his labours, felt and expressed an interest in the revival of a species of poetry to which they had previously been almost total strangers. Frequent applications were made to the young poet for copies of his translations and paraphrases, (for the latter term is more appropriate than the former to some of his versions,) and the trouble which these occasioned, conjoined with the urgency of several of his admirers, induced the coy but scarcely reluctant author, to send a selection from his

productions to the press. "In 1796," he playfully says, "the present author was prevailed on, by the request of friends, to indulge his own vanity by publishing the translations of 'Leonore, with that of the Wild Huntsman,' in a thin quarto." The title page bore no author's or translator's name, being simply "The Chase; and William and Ellen. Edinburgh, Manners and Miller, 1796." This was the first publication from the pen of Walter Scott. Unconsciously he had cast the die upon the hazard of which was set his future fortune.

In perusing these metrical essays, for they deserve no higher title, we are struck with the similarity of the melody of the versification to that of Percy's *Hermit of Warksworth*. It has in the narrative and other less impassioned passages, the same well turned not "linked sweetness;" the same mixture of plainness with a polish which is carried even to monotony. Such a verse as this might almost pass, were we to judge by sound alone, for an extract from the graceful poem we have named :—

Our gallant host was homeward bound,  
With many a song of joy;  
Green waved the laurel in each plume,  
The badge of victory.

And the following possesses a still more striking similarity.

The martial band is past and gone,  
She rends her raven hair,  
And in distraction's bitter mood,  
She weeps with wild despair.

These stanzas likewise resemble the poetry of Dr. Percy in a still more essential characteristic. Like it, they have the subdued unambitious style of the old ballad, without its simplicity. The language is full of the conventional abstractions which, from being the hoarded treasure of the study, have, by slow degrees, become the current medium of social intercourse. It wants the picturesque *naïveté* which charms us in an old song. It is the simplicity of muslin, not of the "hoddin gray."

"When we come, however, (in "William and Helen," from which our examples have been selected,) to the supernatural portion of the story, we find indications of a more nervous turn of mind. The verse is often cramped and harsh, but this is evidently the result of an attempt to change the cloying sweetness of the measure for a more energetic and rapid descant harmonising with the theme. The strain into which the ballad starts when Helen mounts behind her spectral bridegroom, is perhaps the happiest example of this juvenile awkwardness, in which the discerning and experienced eye may detect the first efforts of a loftier

and more daring gracefulness. It is like the ludicrous motions of the raw recruit, ungraceful if contrasted with his free gestures when wielding his spade or mattock, but yet the first step to a more manly and self-possessed deportment.

“Busk, busk, and boune ! Thou mount’st behind,  
Upon my black barb steed ;  
O’er stock and stile, a hundred miles  
We haste to bridal bed.”

“To-night—to-night a hundred miles !—  
Oh, dearest William, stay !  
The bell strikes twelve, dark, dismal hour !  
Oh wait my love till day !”

“Look here—look here—the moon shines clear,  
Full fast I ween we ride ;  
Mount and away ! for ere the day  
We reach our bridal bed.

“The black barb snorts, the bridle rings ;  
Haste, busk and boune, and seat thee !  
The feast is made, the chamber spread,  
The bridal guests await thee !”

Strong love prevailed. She busks, she bounes,  
She mounts the barb behind,  
And round her darling William’s waist  
Her lily arms she twined.

And hurry ! hurry off they rode,  
As fast as fast as might be :  
Spurned from the courser’s thundering heel,  
The flashing pebbles flee.

And on the right, and on the left,  
Ere they could snatch a view,  
Fast, fast, each mountain, mead, and plain,  
And cot and castle flew.

“Sit fast—dost fear ?—The moon shines clear—  
Fleet rides my barb—keep hold !  
Fear’st thou ?” “O no !” she faintly said ;  
“But why so stern and cold ?

“What yonder rings? What yonder sings?

Why shrieks the owlet gray?”

“’Tis death-bell’s clang, his funeral song,

The body to the clay.

“With song and clang, at morrow’s dawn

Ye may inter the dead;

To-night I ride with my young bride,

To deck our bridal bed.

“Come with thy choir, thou coffin’d guest,

To swell our nuptial song!

Come, priest, to bless our marriage-feast!

Come all, come all along!”

Ceased clang and song; down sunk the bier;

The shrouded corpse arose;—

And hurry, hurry! all the train

The thundering steed pursues.

And forward, forward; on they go,

High snorts the straining steed;

Thick pants the rider’s labouring breath,

As headlong on they speed.

“Oh William, why this savage haste?

And where the bridal bed?”

“’Tis distant far.”—“Still short and stern?”

“’Tis narrow, trustless maid.”

“No room for me?”—“Enough for both;—

Speed, speed, my barb, thy course.”

O’er thundering bridge, through foaming surge,

He drove the furious horse.

Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode;

Splash, splash! along the sea;

The steed is wight, the spur is bright,

The flashing pebbles flee.

Fled past on right and left, how fast

Each forest, grove, and bower;

On right and left fled past how fast,

Each city, town, and tower.



“Dost fear? dost fear?—The moon shines clear;—  
Dost fear to ride with me?  
Hurrah! hurrah! the dead can ride!;”—  
“Oh, William, let them be!”

“See there, see there! What yonder swings  
And cracks ’mid whistling rain?”—  
Gibbet and steel, the accursed wheel;  
A murd’rer in his chain.

“Follow! thou felon, follow here,  
To bridal bed we ride;  
And thou shalt prance a fitter dance  
Before me and my bride.”

And hurry, hurry! clash, clash, clash!  
The wasted form descends;  
And fleet as wind, through hazel bush,  
The wild career attends.

Tramp, tramp! along the land they rode!  
Splash, splash! along the sea;  
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,  
The flashing pebbles flee.

How fled what moonshine faintly show’d,  
How fled what darkness hid!  
How fled the earth beneath their feet,  
The heaven above their head!

“Dost fear? dost fear? The moon shines clear,  
And well the dead may ride;  
Does faithful Helen fear for them?”  
“O leave in peace the dead!”

“Barb, barb! methinks I hear the cock;  
The sand will soon be run;  
Barb! barb! I smell the morning air,  
The race will soon be done.”

Tramp, tramp! along the land they rode,  
Splash! splash! along the sea;  
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,  
The flashing pebbles flee.

"Hurrah! hurrah! well ride the dead;  
 The bride, the bride is come!  
 And soon we reach the bridal bed,  
 For, Helen, here's my home!"

This translation can give us no idea of the creative power of the writer's imagination at the time when it was executed. The passage however which has just been quoted, although frequently deficient both in rhyme and rhythm, shows by its intensity that his emotions were sufficiently irritable and susceptible to be hurried along by the horrors of the ghastly ride. It must have been an hour of delight so exquisite as to border on pain, when the future bard, shuddering beneath the vague horrors which crept over him curdling his blood, yet proud of the power he felt of expressing them in verse, trembling with excitement, beheld the last flashes of his expiring taper mingle with the cold gray of the dawn, and almost dared to think that he was a poet. A succession of such stimulating moments has been the death of many a fiery soul, which "o'er-informed its tenement of clay." It was well for the unfledged author that the Edinburgh Review was not then in existence to make what was so sweet in the mouth "bitter in the belly." Had the critic who handled so roughly "the Hours of Idleness," been then exulting in the pride of his brilliant and withal somewhat petulant genius, the barrister of five and twenty would have been as cavalierly treated as the noble minor. But he did not then exist to inflict the enduring consciousness of the world's laugh, a drawback upon the inspired emotions of the midnight jubilee, not unlike the retributive headach which follows the excess of a deep carouse.

On the part of the public, however, the young author suffered the less keen but scarcely less mortifying infliction of total neglect. A multitude of translations of these two poems appeared at the same time with those of Scott, executed by writers whose names were already familiar to the public ear. The adventure, to use his own words, "proved a dead loss, and a great part of the edition was condemned to the service of the trunk-maker." And if the critical portion of the press left him unmolested, there were not wanting good-natured friends to supply its omission in a private way. One lady, to whom he had presented a copy of his book, when asked by him, with all the solicitude of a young author, how she liked it, frankly replied, "not very much." Not satisfied with this reply, he took up the book, and read the ballads aloud to her, hoping probably that by the aid of intonation he might be able to impress her with a more correct sense of their merits. Greatly to his discomfiture, however, he found, on closing the volume, her opinion unaltered. This eager search after approba-

tion from any quarter to bolster up his hesitating confidence in his own powers, contrasts strangely with his indifference at a later period of life, when, satiated with applause, he never made the least attempt to see a review, and often never heard or saw a word that was said on the subject. Praise had become by that time his daily food, the breath of his nostrils, and was inhaled with a less keen relish, although its privation would doubtless have been more keenly felt.

He was not daunted however by this first rebuff. His was one of those manly souls which repeat a baffled effort with increased energy, from the mere shame of any thing like defeat. "I was coldly received," he said long afterwards, "by strangers, but my reputation began rather to increase among my own friends, and on the whole, I was more bent to show the world that it had neglected something worth notice, than to be affronted by its indifference. Or rather, to speak candidly, I found pleasure in the literary labour in which I had, almost by accident, become engaged, and laboured less in the hope of pleasing others, though certainly without despair of doing so, than in the pursuit of a new and agreeable amusement to myself." In short, he possessed an indomitable spirit, which neglect only stung to more daring adventure, the almost unfailing source of great achievements.

In tracing the development of Scott's literary character, we have naturally kept his social adventures in the back ground: nor is there in reality much relating to them at this early period that deserves to be recorded. A lady, to whom we are indebted for some interesting *traits*, represents him as quiet and unobtrusive in mixed company, "rather dull if any thing." From an eminent artist we learn, that even in youth Scott was remarkable for suavity of manner, and his anxiety to keep others in good humour by avoiding any thing that could hurt their feelings, or by appearing to enter with keenness into their favourite pursuits. He used generally to spend his Sundays in the family of the gentleman from whom we have this information, and the children used to look forward anxiously to the return of the day. No juvenile enterprise was concluded upon without his advice, nothing was regarded as good of its kind which did not meet with his approbation. Our informant, warming as he recalled the early emotions of a friendship which endured to the last, wound up his recital with the words, "On Sundays we had him all to ourselves."

Here closes the preparatory stage of our hero's life. He has now served out what Goethe in his romance terms his apprenticeship, and his time as a journeyman. We are henceforth to contemplate him as an author free of his guild, and set up for himself. He brings to aid him, as we have attempted to show in the preceding pages, an immense store of information, and as appears from his pleading in the

case of Niven, a rich power of matured reflection, from his translation of "William and Helen," intense energy of feeling and no mean play of fancy. The young oak is shooting out into a form prophetic of gigantic growth: the river is deepening and broadening as it flows onwards. And not only does the mind expand in strength and stature, the whirl of a busier world is drawing it into a more turbulent vortex. The subject of our narrative has outgrown the narrow sphere of domestic retirement, and is about to be claimed as a denizen of the state. Our rashly undertaken task increases in difficulty as we advance.

## CHAPTER III.

FROM THE PUBLICATION OF "WILLIAM AND HELEN," TO THE PUBLICATION OF THE "LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL," 1796—1805.

THE state of political feeling in Scotland at the period when Scott entered upon manhood, as materially influencing the development of his mind, the formation of his character, and his status in society, ought not to be passed over unnoticed in the history of his life. The subject is difficult, and every mode of discussing it liable to misconstruction, but the attempt must be made.

After the revolution in 1688, the homely institutions and ritual of the presbyterian church were established throughout the country. The influence of a great portion of the landed aristocracy was neutralised by the state of seclusion to which their hostility to the new order of things, and the *surveillance* under which they were necessarily held, doomed them. The union of the kingdoms, by removing even the shadow of the court, the natural sphere of a privileged nobility, to London, attracted thither the portion of the aristocracy friendly to the new government, and by this means the local administration of Scotland was more than ever thrown into the hands of the mercantile and professional classes. The abolition of hereditary jurisdictions completed the transfer of power. By that important enactment a transition was completed, in virtue of which the local administration of law and finance, and the power of enforcing police regulations, passed from the haughty titled families of Scotland to the small land owners and wealthy merchants, aided in the discharge of their duties by the salaried officials of the crown. Beneath this new order of things, trade, favoured by a number of concurrent circumstances, made rapid advances; and with the growth of wealth, the external aspect of the country, the education of the community, and the establishment of a steady police, continued to make progress.

There was something striking in the extreme meekness with which the middle classes of Scotland bore their augmented power and worldly importance. A deep-rooted traditional respect for that aristocracy, with which they so seldom came into contact, retained possession of their minds. They were contented with comfort without aspiring to independence. Bearing the heavy burden of preserving the tranquillity and evolving the capabilities of their country, they were perfectly satisfied

with the liberty to do this in the name, and as it were with the gracious permission of their betters. They pocketed the substantial benefits, and allowed the honour to be borne by aristocratical shoulders; resembling in this the savage who attributes to the virtues of some superstitiously venerated charm—some old brass button, or rag of red cloth—the success in the chase which he owes to his own quick untiring eye, and fleet unwearied foot. Even the Jacobite gentry, whose restless intrigues threatened hourly the tranquillity and growing wealth of the country, were regarded by the honest burghers with some degree of timidity, it is true, yet with a sort of sneaking kindness, owing much to their frank though supercilious deportment, and more to their ancestral pretensions. In short, every person seemed to be animated with a good humoured spirit of acquiescence in things as they were. Scotland was in the estimation of the whiggish middle classes *le vrai royaume de Cocagne*, where, if every thing was not exactly for the best, it was yet so good that it could not well be better. Even the kirk, which, in the days of persecution, had contracted a gaunt look and acid expression,

“A savage air which round her hung  
As of a dweller out of doors”—

a reflection of those bleak wilds and morasses where she was driven to seek shelter far from the busy haunts of men—became sleek, comfortable, and tolerant. Her face plumped out like Lismahago's lantern jaws in the sunshine of Miss Tabitha Bramble's smiles, and amid the atmosphere of her brother's hospitable table.

Matters stood thus at the accession of George III., or even better, for by that time the danger likely to arise from the claims of the Stuart dynasty, existed only in a dream-like remembrance. Scions of the old Jacobite families were instinctively creeping back to the court, and insinuating themselves into the affections of the young monarch. His first favourite, Bute, found the Scots patient of rule on the part of a minister. He found too their local magistracies either in the hands of the crown, or of a limited number of crown vassals, or in a still more limited number of self-elected citizens, and apt to be organised into one huge government burgh. The attacks of Wilkes and others upon Bute were occasionally sharpened by side-long glances at his country, and thus in the quarrel between the court on the one hand, and the wayward and narrow-minded perhaps, but still sturdy and honest independent party of London, the Scots embraced the quarrel of the king and his minister as a national cause. That the American patriots were in many instances on an intimate footing with the whigs of London, and that

their cause was eagerly defended by that party, would perhaps have been of itself sufficient to throw Scotland into the scale opposed to the infant liberties of the colonies; and this inclination was strengthened by other motives. The merchants of Glasgow had embarked largely in the Virginian trade, which was carried on by considerable advances on the part of the traders on this side of the Atlantic, slowly replaced by the returns of colonial produce from the other. Terror, lest the large amount of debt due by Virginia should be held canceled by the emancipation of the colonies, prompted the sons of St. Mungo to take an active part against the Americans. The surplus population of the Highlands, not yet reduced to habits of regular industry, and more eager for martial employment than scrupulous about the cause, flocked in like manner around the royal standard. In short, the sentiments of the whole population of Scotland glowed against the Americans with all the fervour of ignorant and passionate partisans.

The *douce* friends of the revolution establishment, who had long wished to cast over their consciousness of plebeian descent the mantle of patrician intimacy, and the old Jacobite party which had grown weary of devotion to an obsolete system, attachment to which precluded them from taking a share in the active business of life, had now found the point of reunion after which they had long sighed—loyalty to the existing government. It was agreed on both sides to set up the existing government as the golden calf of their worship, without instituting too curious inquiries into its claims to that honour, or the character of the ritual which was to be adopted. The Tories winked hard at the defective hereditary title of the reigning dynasty, and abstained from sneers at the “bits o’ bailie bodies.” The Whigs learned to adopt the same slang of bigoted and exaggerated loyalty, which their new compeers had lately been wont to lavish on the exiled family. In short, freed from the superincumbent load of a real aristocracy, the Jacobite cadets, and the small Whig authorities, erected themselves into a body for supplying its place. They were deficient, it is true, in that free bearing which the consciousness of almost inexhaustible wealth and personal irresponsibility is found to confer; they were still more deficient in those external graces which seem to be acquired nowhere but in the purlieus of a court; their professional avocations tainted their conversation with the pedantry of law, trade, or agriculture. But, in return, they reckoned among their number many ripe and excellent scholars. And in one matter they might have matched the proudest and most far descended aristocracy,—their lordly and supercilious contempt for the intellect, rights, and feelings of the poorer classes. This is the worst, but also the most inevitable effect of erecting any body of men into a privileged *caste*. They learn to disregard the claims of

those beneath them to a common humanity. Men who in their own circles are alive to the finest and tenderest impulses of the heart, can treat with levity and coldness the sufferings of the poor. This is mere thoughtlessness at first, but habit petrifies it into tyranny.

Circumstances had thus conspired to create a numerous petty aristocracy in Scotland, when the heart-burnings spread over Europe by the eruption of the French revolution, called out its most repulsive features into broad light. The upper classes in Scotland re-echoed the war-whoop of Burke and the Duke of Brunswick with a ferocity elsewhere unparalleled. Not only the adherents of the principles of parliamentary reform were branded without distinction as democrats, levelers, and atheists; the timid and somewhat servile class of burgh reformers, who delivered philippics, and laboured busily to eradicate a few of the pustules which indicated a deeply rooted disease, while angrily disclaiming any connection with those who more wisely sought to purify the whole system, were notwithstanding classed among the political Pariahs. The war with France rendered the adherents of existing establishments yet more jealous of the politicians whose designs their fears and fancies had painted in such hideous colours. The pulpit even, and the bench, places which ought to be sacred from passion or prejudice, caught the frenzy; and while political harangues were delivered from the one, the most unfair constructions of evidence, the most unconstitutional doctrines, were promulgated from the other, in the course of the various trials for sedition and other offences, instituted at the command of a jealous and persecuting government.

The mind of Scott, trained as it had been by circumstances, was exactly of the kind to be carried away by the prevailing excitement. He was surrounded by those who, for the sake of peace and quiet, were averse to all innovation; the necessity of which they did not feel. In his mental constitution, the imaginative predominated over the reasoning powers, and his earliest impressions were dreams of high-born knights and warlike deeds. The leveling tenets of the reformers shocked all his preconceived notions. His passions were awakened and heightened by the fervid tone of all around him. The sacrifices of Muir, Gerald, and other victims of power, conspired but to heighten his passions, as the sleuth-hound is rendered fiercer by the sight and smell of blood. Blindly, eagerly, and devotedly, he threw himself into the ranks of the indiscriminating defender of old abuses; and with the tenacity of purpose which he somewhere tells us has been characteristic of his family, he continued through life faithful to the cause of his adoption, although (as we shall have frequent occasion to point out in the sequel of our narrative) his more matured judgment often teased him with sceptical questionings regarding its justice.



The first opportunity afforded to Scott of proving his ardent attachment to his principles, was of a kind peculiarly captivating to a mind of a poetical turn, and a temper which felt "the old riding blood hot at his heart," although

"In him the savage virtues of the race,  
Revenge and all ferocious thoughts, were dead."

It was his share in the organization of a corps of volunteers for national defence, under the prospect of invasion. There was a feeling of generous devotion in such a task, which gilded over, and for a time dispelled the mean instigations of party spirit. The integrity of the soil was threatened, and men of all political principles, disregarding the original cause of the danger, flocked around their country's standard. Edinburgh alone furnished a force of 3000 armed and disciplined volunteers, including a regiment of cavalry from the city and county, and two corps of artillery, each capable of serving twelve guns. Nor was the spirit confined to the capital. It spread through the land; and it is an interesting coincidence, that while the well-knit youthful nerves of Scott were grasping the sabre hilt in Edinburgh, the wasting and attenuated frame of Burns was toiling in the ranks at Dumfries. The earliest original production of Scott that has been preserved, is his "War-song of the Edinburgh Light Dragoons;" and one of the latest lights of Burns' song is, "Does haughty Gaul invasion threat?"

But for an imagination which, like that of Scott, had ever found its chief amusement in dwelling upon legends of deeds of arms, this bustling and arming for the fight had a charm beyond what it possessed for his more prosaic companions. An anecdote which we have from a lady who witnessed the scene, will best show the eagerness with which he trampled upon all hindrances interposed between him and the gratification of his martial ardour. When the yeomanry were first embodied, he was rejected in consequence of his lameness, at which he was much distressed. It happened that some of the most enthusiastic promoters of this volunteer corps dined not long afterwards at the house of a friend where he was on a visit. The subject of his wish to join the corps was renewed, while the party were standing in the open air enjoying the breeze; and Walter, on being again assured that his lameness was an insurmountable bar to his admission, threw himself up and caught the *couple-leg* of an out-house. After allowing himself to hang there for a considerable space, he turned to his friends with a tear in his eye, and said, that "although he had a bad leg, there was not a better pair of arms among them." Farther obstacles were interposed by some of

his more sedate friends, on the ground of the incompatibility of military duties with his professional avocations, but proved equally unavailing.

"He that will to Cupar maun to Cupar," says our country proverb; and, despite of every hindrance, Scott forced his way into the post of quarter-master to the two regiments of Edinburgh Light Horse. He tells us somewhere in his writings, that he was fortunate enough to be useful in the preservation of discipline, which must have been no easy matter, in a corps consisting almost entirely of young and high-spirited men. We learn from other sources, that so eager were the brothers in arms to make themselves masters of their new profession, that they drilled daily at six A. M. in the neighbourhood of Jock's Lodge, and had another long drill at a later period of the day. Scott was always present and always active. When off duty, his mind remained still engrossed with the duties of his office. No stray article of military furniture which might prove useful in completing the equipment of his corps escaped his eye. A lady distantly connected with his family still relates with great glee, his chaffering with her for some sabres and other accoutrements that had belonged to her brother. The services which he rendered to his regiment by his unalterable good humour, his zeal in preventing or soldering up quarrels, and his promotion of hilarity on festive occasions, were scarcely less important than his devotion to the business of the corps. An anecdote corroborative of this opinion is told by the indefatigable preserver of the Traditions of Edinburgh:—

"The commander of the corps, as not unusually happened, was rather ignorant of the movements of a cavalry regiment, and therefore required to bring with him to the drill a paper containing the accustomed words of command in their regular series. One unfortunate morning—a very cold one—the officer came unfurnished with this list, and was of course desperately nonplussed. He could positively do nothing: the troop stood for twenty minutes quite motionless, while he was vainly endeavouring to find the means of supplying the requisite document. At this moment, while the men were all as cold as their own stirrup-irons, and more like a set of mutes at a funeral than a redoubted band of volunteers against Gallic invasion, Sir Walter came limping up, and said to a few of the other officers, in his usual gravely jocular manner, 'I think the *corpse* is rather long in lifting this morning,' a drollery so pat to the moment, as to set the whole off in almost inextinguishable laughter."

In the "war-song," however, to which we alluded above, we possess the least perishable record of his military ardour, and therefore let it stand here as part and portion of his biography.

To horse ! to horse ! the standard flies,  
The bugles sound the call :  
The Gallic navy stem the seas,  
The voice of battle's on the breeze,  
Arouse ye one and all.

From high Dun-Edin's towers we come,  
A band of brothers true ;  
Our casques the leopard's spoils surround,  
With Scotland's hardy thistle crown'd,  
We boast the red and blue.\*

Though tamely crouch to Gallia's frown  
Dull Holland's tardy train  
Their ravish'd toys though Romans mourn,  
Though gallant Switzers vainly spurn,  
And foaming gnaw the chain ;

Oh ! had they mark'd the avenging call  
Their brethren's murder gave,  
Disunion ne'er their ranks had mown,  
Her patriot valour desperate grown,  
Sought freedom in the grave !

Shall we too bend the stubborn head,  
In freedom's temple born,  
Dress our pale cheek in timid smile  
To hail a master in our isle,  
Or brook a victor's scorn ?

No ! Though destruction o'er the land  
Come pouring as a flood,  
The sun that sees our falling day,  
Shall mark our sabres' deadly sway,  
And set that night in blood.

For gold let Gallia's legions fight,  
Or plunder's bloody gain ;  
Unbribed, unbought, our swords we draw,  
To guard our king, to fence our law,  
Nor shall their edge be vain.

\* The royal colours.

If ever breath of British gale  
 Shall fan the tri-colour,  
 Or foot step of invader rude,  
 With rapine foul, and red with blood,  
 Pollute our happy shore ;

Then farewell home ! and farewell friends !  
 Adieu each tender tie !  
 Resolved we mingle in the tide,  
 Where charging squadrons furious ride,  
 To conquer or to die.

To horse ! to horse ! the sabres gleam ;  
 High sounds our bugle's call ;  
 Combined by honour's sacred tie,  
 Our word is *Laws and Liberty* !  
 March forward one and all !

There is an unamiable propensity in most men to take every first attempt of one of their own standing to distinguish himself above his fellows as a personal insult. "What right has he to pretend to do what they cannot?" Keeping this feeling in remembrance, we are no ways astonished to learn that Scott's presumption in daring to write a song for the corps gave huge offence to some of his companions in arms. They did not venture to criticise it, although being in reality a mere extemporaneous effort, something like a speech after dinner, it may be obnoxious enough to ill-natured remarks. They ridiculed the idea of his writing a song at all. The gentleman from whom we derive this information distinctly remembers a large party of the officers of the corps dining together at Musselburgh, where the chief amusement at a certain period of the night consisted in repeating with burlesque emphasis the initial line. "To horse!" to horse!" and laughing at this "attempt of Scott's" as a piece of supreme absurdity.

For the annoyance he might feel at the paltry malice of these coarse and vulgar minds, he was amply recompensed by the strengthening attachment of earlier, and the acquisition of new friends. Among the former were Sir William Rae, late Lord Advocate, and Mr. Colin Mackenzie ; among the latter Mr. Skene of Rubislaw,\* a gentleman

\* In the introduction to one of the cantos of *Marmion*, (published in 1808) the author reminds this friend,—

Eleven years we now may tell  
 Since we have known each other well ;

whose accomplishments as a draughtsman, and zeal in promoting a taste for the fine arts in Scotland, entitle him to a respectful tribute here. His activity and perseverance likewise attracted the attention of Henry, Duke of Buccleuch, and Mr. Henry Dundas, one of the secretaries of state; both lively promoters of the scheme of national defence for Scotland. The former cultivated his personal intimacy; the latter marked him for an accomplished and energetic young man, whose services as a political partisan it might be worth while to conciliate by professional advancement.

Altogether the portion of Scott's life which he devoted to a study of military matters was one of intense enjoyment, and to which he often recurs both in a serious and a playful mood. Gibbon tells us that his experience of military movements acquired in the Hampshire militia, was of vital service to him in elucidating the Roman system of tactics; and perhaps we may not be going too far in attributing to the scraps of strategical knowledge picked up during his career as quarter master, Scott's skill in marshaling battles and conducting sieges in his works of fiction. The following passage from one of the earlier chapters of *Waverley* has every feature of a picture from the life.

"Meanwhile his military education proceeded. Already a good horseman, he was now initiated into the arts of the manege, which, when carried to perfection, almost realise the fable of the Centaur, the guidance of the horse appearing to proceed from the rider's mere volition, rather than from the use of any apparent and external-signal of motion. He received also instructions in his field duty; but I must own, that when his first ardour was past, his progress fell short in the latter part of what he wished and expected. The duty of an officer, the most imposing of all others to the inexperienced mind, because accompanied with so much outward pomp and circumstance, is in its essence a very dry and abstract task, depending chiefly upon arithmetical combinations, requiring much attention, and a cool and reasoning head to bring them into action. Our hero was liable to fits of absence, in which his blunders excited some mirth, and called down some reproof. This circumstance impressed with him a painful sense of inferiority in those qualities which appeared most to deserve and obtain regard in his new profession. He asked himself in vain, why his eye could not judge of distance or space so well as those of his companions; why his head was not always successful in disentangling the various

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Since, riding side by side, our hand  
First drew the voluntary brand;  
And sure, through many a varied scene  
Unkindness never came between.

partial movements necessary to effect an evolution ; and why his memory, so alert upon most occasions, did not correctly retain technical phrases, and minute points of etiquette or field discipline. Waverley was naturally modest, and therefore did not fall into the egregious mistake of supposing such minuter points of military duty beneath his notice, or conceiting himself to be born a general, because he made an indifferent subaltern. The truth was, that the vague and unsatisfactory course of reading which he had pursued, working upon a temper naturally retired and abstracted, had given him that wavering and unsettled habit of mind, which is most averse to study and riveted attention."

In the *Antiquary* we find a playful account of the tone and colouring lent to society by the volunteering ardour of this period, in one of those happy passages where an author pretends to laugh at that which he truly and warmly cherishes. Major Dalgetty, picking his teeth and pondering over "the abstruse calculations necessary for drawing up a brigade of two thousand men on the principle of extracting the square root," is in all probability a good-humoured caricature of some of the writer's own after-dinner reveries. And in the introduction to the fourth canto of *Marmion*, dedicated to Mr. Skene, we find a pleasing description of the evening festivities of the bold Light Dragoons of Edinburgh, after quoting which, we must quit this theme for the present.

And blithesome nights, too, have been ours,  
 When winter stript the summer's bowers ;  
 Careless we heard, what now I hear,  
 The wild blast sighing deep and drear,  
 When fires were bright, and lamps beam'd gay,  
 And ladies tuned the lovely lay ;  
 And he was held a laggard soul,  
 Who shunned to quaff the sparkling bowl.  
 Then he, whose absence we deplore,  
 Who breathes the gale of Devon's shore,  
 The longer missed, bewailed the more ;  
 And thou, and I, and dear-loved Rae,  
 And one whose name I may not say,—  
 For not Mimosa's tender tree  
 Shrinks sooner from the touch than he,  
 In merry chorus well combined,  
 With laughter drowned the whistling wind.  
 Mirth was within ; and Care without  
 Might gnaw her nails to hear our shout.  
 Not but amid the buxom scene  
 Some grave discourse might intervene—

Of the good horse that bore him best,  
His shoulder, hoof, and arching crest ;  
For like mad Tom's, our chiefest care  
Was horse to ride, and weapon wear.  
Such nights we've had, and though the game  
Of manhood seem more sober, tame,  
And though the field-day or the drill  
Seem less important now—yet still  
Such may we hope to share again.

Scott was far from allowing these seductive pursuits to distract his attention from his professional avocations. He continued to be a regular attendant upon such meetings of the Faculty of Advocates as were held for transacting the private business of the body. At the annual election of office-bearers in 1797, we find him continued on the list of Curators of the Library, and likewise nominated one of the examiners, whose duty it is to test the acquirements of civil law, of such individuals as apply for admission into the Faculty. In the month of July of the same year we find him assisting his friend Mr. Ferguson in a trial before the Court of Justiciary. The case was that of a person of the name of Potts, accused of a very aggravated act of house-breaking and robbery. The trial was long and complicated, but as Scott took scarcely any active share in it, we pass over the details as foreign to our subject, simply adding, that the prisoner was found guilty, and sentenced to suffer the last penalty of the law.

On the 7th and 11th of October, Scott was engaged in a series of trials, which, as serving to throw some light on the temper and circumstances of the peasantry in the South of Scotland at that period, merit more particular attention. By an act of parliament passed in the year 1797, with a view to facilitate the raising and embodying of a militia force in Scotland, it was ordained, that the schoolmaster of every parish should make yearly returns to the lieutenant of the county of the persons liable to serve. The burden of military service fell necessarily upon the poor and industrious classes who could not afford to provide substitutes, and whose families were in many instances left destitute by the removal of those whose labour had provided for them. By the rich the enactment was easily evaded. The iniquity of such an arrangement was not likely to escape notice at a period when disaffection pervaded the labouring classes to so wide an extent. On the other hand, the passionate determination of the privileged orders to regard all murmurs from the people as a crime, increased their zeal for the enforcement of the obnoxious law. The indignation of the oppressed peasantry was fostered and matured by the underhand exertions of some

of the more violent of that sect of politicians whose public expression of their sentiments had been forcibly prevented by the suppression of the meeting of delegates at Edinburgh, styling themselves the British Convention, and by the banishment of several of its members. By the active instigations of these agitators, the labourers were induced to rise in many counties of Scotland, for the purpose of forcibly preventing the execution of the enactment. The local authorities were routed in more than one instance, and the escape of the ringleaders facilitated by the arrangements of their friends in Edinburgh. The riots were sufficiently serious to call for the interference of the law officers of the crown; and with the view of striking terror by example, several of the parties implicated were arraigned at the bar of the high court of justiciary.

With the first of these trials in which Scott was concerned, his connection seems to have been entirely accidental. It was observed by the presiding judge, that of the four prisoners placed at the bar, two had no counsel in attendance to conduct their defence, and in conformity to the uniform practice of the court, he recommended them to the professional care of two members of the bar. Messrs. Walter Scott and James L'Amy, who happened to be in court, were named by his lordship, and accepted by the prisoners. The want of previous notice prevented these gentlemen from taking any more active part in the trial, which lasted so long that the verdict of the jury was not received till next day, than watching its progress, and stating at the close those points of the evidence which appeared most favourable to their clients. This latter duty was performed by Scott. Upon the reading of the verdict an objection was stated to it by the counsel for the other two prisoners, on the ground of a defect in point of form, which was after some argument overruled by the court. In this discussion, Scott seems to have taken no share. The whole of the accused were in consequence of the verdict of the jury sentenced to transportation for fourteen years, notwithstanding a representation by the chancellor (or foreman) "that he and his brethren were of opinion, that the pannels had been misled and instigated to their lawless proceedings by some underhand and designing persons."

It appeared, from the statements of the witness examined, that the prisoners, one of whom was a female, had formed part of a riotous assemblage, amounting in number to several hundreds, armed with clubs and sticks, who had attacked two depute-lieutenants of the county of Berwick, while engaged at the church of Eccles in adjusting and amending the lists of the schoolmasters. The mob, after driving the magistrates from the church, and forcibly dissolving the meeting, forced Mr. Marjoribanks, one of the depute-lieutenants, to deliver up the lists furnished by the schoolmaster of the parish, to swear that he would never



in future assist in carrying the obnoxious law into execution, and to subscribe a fair copy of his oath, wrote out upon a piece of stamped paper. The insurgents next proceeded to the house of the schoolmaster, whom they compelled to take and subscribe a similar oath. Lastly, they proceeded to the seat of Sir Alexander Purves, the other deputy-lieutenant concerned in the transaction, and on his refusing to come out to them, forced their way into the house. This gentleman they likewise compelled by threats to take the same oath they had dictated to his brother in office. It does not appear that any person was seriously hurt in the tumult, and no insult was offered to the ladies of Sir Alexander's family. The determined perseverance of the rioters, their discrimination in selecting the objects of their attack, and refraining from wanton aggression of others, and the serio-comic incident of the stamped paper upon which the oath was written, must have made a deep impression upon Scott, and perhaps taught him for the first time the true character of a Scottish mob, an assemblage which he afterwards so vividly and correctly portrayed in his "Heart of Mid-Lothian."

Whilst the riot, to the details of which we have had occasion to advert in our account of the trial of the 7th October, must be considered as offering little more than a picture of the tone and temper of an ordinary Scottish mob, the events connected with the trial, which took place on the 11th, are more intimately bound up with the temporary feelings of the year 1797. In Berwickshire, and most other counties of Scotland, the labouring classes rose almost to a man, aided and organised in many instances by the parish schoolmasters; and the county gentlemen, unprepared for resistance, yielded to the exigency of the moment, reserving to themselves the manly vengeance of swearing away the liberty of their assailants in a court of justice. In the county of Haddington, however, they were better provided with the means of resisting the popular will. The county had raised a strong corps of volunteer cavalry; a detachment of the Cinque Port Light Dragoons were quartered in the burgh of Haddington; and the Pembrokehire cavalry, along with the Sutherland Fencibles, were stationed in the vicinity of Musselburgh.

The village of Tranent is situated between the towns at which the English troops were stationed. Its inhabitants and those of the neighbourhood are composed, in addition to the usual compliment of landlords, farmers, and farm-labourers, principally of colliers and carters—the former a body of men among whom the practice of secret affiliation has always been carried to a great extent, and the locality of whose labours facilitates their abstraction from the police, when their disagreements with it are of a trifling or ordinary nature; the latter a class rendered strong and fearless by their migratory habits, but at the same time rude and little amenable to the laws. It is impossible at this distance of time

to determine whether the great boldness and long established habits of acting in union of the Tranent people had occasioned more fear in the minds of the local magistrates than their brothers in office elsewhere were affected with, or whether the precipitancy which occasioned the deplorable scene of slaughter we have now to describe, was the unaided result of their more timorous and irritable temper. Certain it is, that the same symptoms of conspiracy observed in the vicinity of Tranent were to be seen in every parish of Scotland; and what is more to the purpose, a body of men who assembled between Gifford and Haddington to represent their grievances to the depute-lieutenants convened at the very next militia station, on receiving a civil answer, dispersed peaceably after passing a resolution to co-operate with their countrymen to the utmost of their power in resisting the obnoxious enactment.

Mr. Anderson of St. Germain's, Mr. Caddell of Cockenzie, Major Wright residing at Ormiston, and Mr. Gray of Southfield, were the gentlemen appointed as depute-lieutenants of the county of Haddington, to receive and revise the militia lists of the parishes in the neighbourhood of Tranent. Tuesday, the 29th of August, 1797, was the day fixed for the discharge of this unpleasant duty. For some time previous they had been rendered anxious by the sound of drums beating during the night in the adjacent villages. On the evening of Monday the 28th, an ordely dragoon riding from Haddington to Edinburgh was obstructed on the streets of Tranent by a crowd assembled after the day's labour to discuss the proceedings of the morrow. No insult was offered to the soldier, but the dense crowd necessarily impeded his progress. With brutal impatience he endeavoured to force a way, by riding down some of the men near him. He was unsuccessful, but the attempt gave rise to an exchange of abusive epithets which so increased his choler, that he turned upon the crowd and attempted to draw his sabre. The hilt of his weapon and his bridle were promptly seized by the nearest bystanders, and some women and boys who had mingled with the crowd began pelting him with stones. He was rescued from his imminent danger by the very men he had first assaulted, and allowed to pursue his journey to Edinburgh, which he did with the reckless fury of a madman, threatening every person he met, and attempting to ride over others.

The passions of the people assembled on the streets of Tranent were naturally inflamed by this adventure. A quick eager buzz ran through the crowd. At last some one raised the cry of "no militia," which was caught up and repeated amid huzzaing and waving of hats. The rabble of boys and idle women, who constantly cover the flanks, and advance in front of a mob like the swarms of *tirailleurs* thrown out before a French army, next ran off in the direction of the schoolmaster's house

He chanced to be from home, and his wife, terrified by the thick pattering of the feet of the urchins, their cries and threats, and the dense mass of people seen in the distance, handed to them from the window an old book and a paper which she said was the militia roll. The rabble, totally unorganised and destitute of leaders, continued to ramble about the village and its vicinity for a short time, at the close of which they began to disperse, and those who had received the papers, beginning to feel themselves in an awkward scrape, went back and re-delivered them to the schoolmaster's wife. No injury was offered to person or property during this aimless burst of popular indignation.

Mr. Anderson, of St. Germain's, however, took the alarm, and about half-past nine addressed a letter to Captain Finlay, the commanding officer at Haddington, requesting the co-operation of a party of the military under his command on the morrow. Even this force, however, was reckoned insufficient, and with the consent of his colleagues he, between four and five A. M. on the Tuesday, despatched circular letters, commanding the instant attendance of the County Yeomanry Cavalry at his house. The detachment from Haddington was ostentatiously drawn up on the streets of Tranent, the main body being stationed near the head inn at an early hour.

In this inn the magistrates assembled at the appointed time, and were proceeding to business, when the delegates from the neighbouring parishes arrived in a body, and drew up in front of it. Their leaders sent to the gentlemen assembled within a petition that they would not proceed to enforce the regulations of the militia act, addressed :—"To the honourable gentlemen assembled at Tranent, for the purpose of raising six thousand militiamen in Scotland," and subscribed by an immense number of names arranged in a circular form. The only answer returned to this petition was an imperious order to disperse. The supercilious manner in which their request was received co-operated with the memory of the preceding evening's transactions to excite an angry feeling in the multitude. The attempt to overawe and check every expression of their sentiments by the presence of an armed soldiery yet further embittered their dispositions. And the last drop "which makes the cup o'erflow" was added, when the volunteer cavalry of the county galloped into the village brandishing their sabres, jeering and boasting. The experience of every occasion on which this equivocal force has been employed, from the massacre of Tranent down to that of Manchester, warrants us in saying that it is the worst and most dangerous implement ever placed by a silly or abject legislature in the hands of a despotically inclined executive. Its ranks are filled with young hot-brained fools, who fancy themselves elevated by their position above the multitude, and bound in duty to trample it down whenever it crosses their path. Destitute alike of the cool passionless bravery of the sol-

dier of the line, and the fellow-feeling for the unarmed citizen of the national guard, they unite the defects of both without one of their virtues. Vulgar and ferocious they have ever proved themselves, and their utility as a defensive force has never yet been put to the test. This is a somewhat different picture from what the imaginations of Scott and other more refined members of the body presented to them, but it is more correct. The beauty and integrity of their emotions we do not call in question, but being excited by their connection with such force we must regard them as analogous to those deep rich glossy dyes which the blessed sun can imprint even on the surface of the putrid puddle which stagnates around a dunghill. It is ever thus with the specious virtues fostered by the institution of *castles*; they are reared on the ruins of more and more important virtues. The anecdote related above of a dinner at Musselburgh shows what an incompatibility of sentiment must have existed between Scott's intimate associates and the rude mass of the corps.

Be this as it may, the arrival of the district yeomanry cavalry was as usual the signal for the commencement of mischief. The women, always foremost on such occasions, began to throw stones in the direction of the inn, and but a short time elapsed before every window of the house was shattered. One of the lieutenants, who was also a justice of the peace, cautioned the people to depart, and attempted to read the riot act, but without being heard or attended to. Several of the stones struck individuals in the ranks of the Cinque Port cavalry, who began to grow impatient and irritated. After some brief delay, the word was given to charge, and the troopers dashed into the middle of the assembled multitude, cutting right and left with their sabres.

But the *perfidium ingenium Solorum* was now completely aroused. The delegates from the neighbouring parishes, the individuals attending to plead exemptions from service, the inhabitants of the village—all were revolted and indignant at this attempt of barefaced power to trample down the people and stifle their complaints. Armed with no better weapons than their walking sticks and the stones lying about the rugged ill-cleared streets of a Scottish village, they threw themselves among the ranks of the armed cavalry, seized the horses by the bridles and opposed ash saplings to cold steel. The military commanders soon discovered that unless they had recourse to their fire-arms the superiority of their men was extremely doubtful. Orders were accordingly given to load and fire. The peasantry began to retreat from the unequal conflict, but without evincing the slightest symptom of an intention to relinquish it. The blood of women was on the swords of the troopers, the contest had been provoked by the supercilious and masterful violence of the magistracy. From windows, heads of stairs, and tops of houses, the people continued to attack the soldiers with whatever missiles came to hand. One man stationed behind a chimney wrenched

from it brick after brick to discharge at the heads of the assailants. He was repeatedly fired at before he was brought down, and succeeded in emptying six or seven dragoon saddles. During this affray, Mr. Anderson of St. Germain's, its principal instigator, made his escape to Musselburgh, riding behind a dragoon, and thence despatched a reinforcement to the friends he had deserted. Thus strengthened, the peasantry were after a desperate struggle driven from the village, which was shortly after taken possession of by three or four hundred of the Sutherland fencibles. The slaughter however did not cease here. The infuriated cavalry, in despite of every exertion of their officers, pursued the unarmed fugitives over the neighbouring muirs and through the fields of ripened corn. Men, women and boys were indiscriminately cut down, notwithstanding their piteous entreaties for mercy. Several persons who had not been near Tranent were encountered by the soldiers and slain.

Thus was opposition to an unjust law yet more unjustly repressed, and scarcely "a voice was heard to upbraid." An incidental taunt was all the notice vouchsafed to it in the house of the *people's representatives*. The only editor in Scotland, Mr. Morthland, advocate, and editor of the Scots Chronicle, who dared to state the facts of the case, as they really happened, was attacked at once by a prosecution for libel, at the instance of Mr. Anderson; a motion for his expulsion from the Faculty of Advocates, made by Mr. Charles Hope, now president of the court of session; and the threat of proceedings to be instituted against him by the law-officers of the crown. Wearied and harassed by such a multiplicity of persecutions, he was obliged to give way to the torrent, and desist from the publication of his journal, at that time one of the most extensively circulated in Scotland. But the effrontery of the local administration of Scotland did not stop even here. Four of the peasantry, who had escaped from the Tranent massacre, were brought to the bar of the court of Justiciary, accused of rioting and mobing. The vindictive feelings of government were not glutted by all the blood shed on that occasion. It was their trial which took place on the 11th of October, and gave the Tranent riot a yet closer connection with Scott's personal history, than it could have had as a mere illustration of the temper of the times.

The pleas urged in defence of each of the four pannels were different, (one of them, a woman, escaped, having proved, by producing her record of baptism, that she had been indicated by a wrong name,) and different counsel appeared for each. It will be sufficient for our purpose to follow the fortunes of Neil Reidpath, an agricultural labourer, who was defended by Mr. Walter Scott, advocate. We find the following entry in the "Books of Adjournal;"—"Scott for the pannel Reidpath represented that he did not mean to object to the relevancy of

the libel :—That his client had gone to Tranent on the day libeled for the purpose of getting his name struck out of the militia list, as he was above the age ; but had no concern in the disgraceful proceedings of the mob there assembled.” In support of this allegation five witnesses were produced, respecting one of whom we find the following notandum in the record quoted above. “ It being observed by the court that the said David Brotherstones has been guilty of concealing the truth upon oath, therefore the said lords ordain him to be carried to the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, therein to be detained till Friday next at ten o’clock, forenoon, and then to be set at liberty. (Signed) Robert M’Queen, I. P. D.” Notwithstanding this awkward accident, the most grating that can happen to a young and ingenuous mind, the evidence against the prisoner was so insufficient that the jury included him in their general verdict,—“Find the libel not proven.” Little did the young advocate think, while triumphing in his success, that the minute details of the riot to which he was that day forced to listen, had furnished materials to aid in rearing the imperishable structure of his fame. The pleasure afforded by this reflection is, however, materially dulled by the remembrance that his kindly feelings, narrowed to the range of his own associates, were not strong enough to break the bonds cast around him by political sectarianism—that he was led to give up to party what was meant for mankind.

At an earlier period of this narrative, we had occasion to mention that Scott was in the habit of making frequent excursions into the country. Some desultory but minute enough reminiscences of these rambles we have received from an old servant of the name of George Walkinshaw, who used to attend him during their continuance. Walkinshaw, then a boy of ten years of age, entered the service of old Mr. Scott in 1796. The excursions which he describes terminated in 1799, after Scott’s appointment to the office of sheriff. We have been unable to fix more precisely the dates of the little adventures related to us by Walkinshaw, and therefore give them here as forming a natural and appropriate link between the history of Scott’s social and active pursuits, and that of his literary exertions. These rambles were in truth so many perusals of the great book of nature. We preserve, as nearly as we can, the simple language of our informant.

George Walkinshaw, whose mother had nursed Mr. Thomas Scott, and taken charge of Walter at the same time, was ten years old in 1796, when he entered the service of old Mr. Scott. He was much about Walter’s person ; and it is from him that the description of his young master’s favourite attitude while studying, lying on his back on the floor with all his books around him, was obtained. The fondness for dogs which early manifested itself, and continued a prominent feature of Scott’s character to the last, had already strengthened into a habit,

He possessed, in 1796, an old dog which he called Snap, an animal so docile and sagacious, that the boy Walkinshaw was decidedly of opinion that the creature was not *canny*. Snap seldom quitted his master's room, except to accompany him on his rambles, and slept every night at his bed-foot. If we may trust George's account, when Walter required the attendance of any of the servants, he needed only to name them to Snap, who trotted off to the hall, or kitchen, and barked at them until they followed him to his master. Some allowance must be made in this story for the youth and credulity of the narrator at the time, more especially, as they seem occasionally to have exposed him to a system of playful mystification at the hands of his master.

Scott was now in the enjoyment of confirmed and robust health. He was a vigorous walker, ever and anon precipitating himself forward by a huge spring. In ascending and descending stairs he distanced every body. His excursions, when the distance was not great, were made on foot. A few necessities were packed up in a bundle, and strapped upon George's back, (Scott, from some whim or another, always called him Donald;) and in this guise the pair wandered from house to house. On these occasions the boy was strictly forbidden to call him "Sir." It was arranged between them, that George should first enter the house they intended to visit, in order to spy how the land lay. If it appeared that their company was not likely to be regarded as an intrusion, his master followed. The establishments into which he thus sought to penetrate, were generally such as had been pointed out to him as the residences of very old people; and with these ancient crones and gaffers he would enter into conversation, striving to lead them on to dilate on the reminiscences of their youth. If the inmates proved shy and reluctant to converse with strangers, he used to ask for oat cakes and milk for his boy, of which he at times partook himself, but only in those cases where payment was accepted.

An incident which Walkinshaw distinctly recollects to have occurred during one of these rambles, shows that even at this early period, Scott's propensity for scraping together "a fouth of auld nick-nackets," had begun to display itself. It was in a poor cottage, in a muirland part of the country, that the future knight and his squire were conversing with an old dame, who, as her only piece of finery, displayed around her withered neck a string of large "lammer beads." They were the pride of the good lady's heart, and held in high esteem by the old people of the country side for their sanatory virtues. Besides possessing many other occult qualities, they were known to be a sure charm against the malign influence of witchcraft, and an infallible remedy for sore eyes. Walter asked the old woman if she would sell her beads. "Yes," was the reply; "but I fear ye are no rich aneuch to buy them." "What do ye ask for them guidwife?" "I'll no gie them under sax

pennies the piece." "But, guidwife, I'll gie ye twal pennies for them." In a moment they were from her neck and carefully counted; the old crone being evidently afraid lest the bold bidder should retract his offer if allowed time for consideration. The cash was paid, and the glad vender exclaimed,—“Fair fa' yer sonsie face! ye're the honestest merchant I ever met wi'.” The beads were subsequently reset, and presented to Mrs. Scott soon after her marriage.

It would appear from the doubts entertained by the lady of the “lamer beads,” as to the ability of her guest's purse to meet the purchase of her fairy treasure, that Scott's incognito was tolerably well preserved. An adventure which befell him on another occasion, a mile or two above Dalkeith, is further corroborative of this. On knocking at the door, he was welcomed by the gudewife, in these words:—“Come in by, honest man! I'm glad you're come, for the gudeman's coat needs clouting.” “What's that she says, Donald?” asked Scott. “She thinks we are tailors, and wants us to mend the claise.” The fancy struck him as so ludicrous, that he burst into a violent fit of laughter, and it was some time before he recovered himself sufficiently to be able to undeceive his hostess.

We remarked above, that he at times partook of the simple fare which he procured for his attendant from the cottars. In general, however, he preferred filling Donald's pockets, and despatching his own share afterwards seated by the side of the highway, or in some picturesque nook which struck his fancy. In a retired and beautiful spot, he would often sit for hours with the boy by his side, speaking eagerly to himself. Then he would laugh aloud, and take his note-book from the large side pocket of his short coat, and write for a while. He would then return it, and again go on to converse with himself. Even as they walked along, it was his habit to break out suddenly into a laugh, and then stop short and begin to write. These rambles were, in a great measure, the secret and the source of his poetic power. It is pleasing to contemplate the future poet in the full triumphant buoyancy of animal spirit, gushing from perfect health and strength, wandering freely along the highway, or “through the muir among the heather,” like a pilgrim of romance, whose stations were one reeky hovel after another, totally wrapped up in his own imaginings, laughing and talking to himself. He walked with men, “among them, not of them.” He dreamed with all the impetuosity of youthful passion, his dream of youth, but it was one so pure, so light, that he awoke from it without depression. These excursions were seasons of intense enjoyment.

When Scott had any more extensive journey in contemplation, he and Walkinshaw were mounted upon two ponies. His expenses were not materially augmented by this addition to his retinue; for he has



left on record, in a note to "St. Ronan's Well," that "a young man, with two ponies and a serving-lad, might then travel from the house of one Mr. Dods to another, through most part of Scotland, for about five shillings a-day." But if his expenditure continued nearly the same, the annoyance to which the simplicity of his attendant occasionally exposed him was increased. He generally gave the boy silver to pay the tolls, with orders to lay out the small change which he received back in the purchase of gingerbread. In one of his abstracted fits, he handed Donald some silver to pay a toll through which they were to pass in the course of the day, merely saying to him, "mind the gingerbread." The boy soon after espying a woman with a well filled basket, stopped and expended all the money given him upon it. His master, who had insensibly got a good way a-head, looked round, and not feeling quite secure in the sound judgment of his faithful follower, rode back to see what kept him. "Donald what detains you?" "I am putting the gingerbread in my pockets," says Donald. "Have you spent all in gingerbread? How are we to get through the toll?" "Ye said mind the gingerbread, and I hae na forgotten." This adventure, not unworthy to rank with the purchase of the gross of green spectacles by the sapient Moses Primrose, was long a favourite joke with Scott, who used to tell it at table in his own *packy* way, while poor Donald stood at his back, vexed, fidgeting, and blushing.

During these rambles, Scott always slept at the public houses, and generally spent the evening beside the kitchen fire, which was, in these simple days, what the traveller's room is in our own. There, sometimes treating some packman, who took his fancy, to a glass, sometimes birling his bawbee with farmers or drovers on their way to distant markets, he joined in the conversation incidental to the place. He sought to draw out his companions at times by humouring the current of their ideas, at times by contradicting and instigating them to discussion. One evening, beside a kitchen fire more crowded than usual, he on a sudden lifted his staff, and holding it over Donald's head, said, with a stern voice, "Pay the lawin, sir; pay the lawin." "I hae nae lawin." "If ye dinna pay the lawin I'll break your head." As he uttered these words, up started a huge farmer, with "How daur ye bid a bairn like that pay your lawin? If ye offer to lay yer stick on him I'll baste yer hide for ye. Ye had mair need to gie him a bawbee to buy a bap. Come here, my man; there's a bawbee." Donald shrunk from the good-natured farmer, but his master insisted upon his accepting the offer. "Gang and tak it, man; gang and tak it." Donald obeyed; and Scott and the farmer having come to an understanding, commenced a jollification, and continued the best of friends till the farmer left the house for the evening.

We have seen, in the course of these anecdotes, the attention paid by Scott to the comfort of his young attendant. It deserves also to be noticed, that, during the whole of their excursions, he never lost the command of his temper but once. Snap was the occasion of the explosion. The beast had a good deal of the bull dog in him, and was continually engaging in quarrels with others of his own species. One day he attacked a colly by the road-side, when Donald, annoyed by the scrapes into which Snap was repeatedly bringing him, snatched a stake from the neighbouring hedge, and struck him over the head, that the blood came. When they afterwards came up to the spot where Scott stood looking on, he slightly raised his staff, and said, in a suppressed tone, "Donald, I'll break your head for breaking Snap's. Do not hurt him again." And here, checking himself, he broke off abruptly.

These excursions were persevered in until Scott received the appointment of sheriff. After that occurrence his person began to be more generally known. His rambles, when not extended to a distance, necessarily assumed a different character. He felt constrained, and enjoyed the humours of his casual companions less. By degrees he discontinued a practice which had ceased to afford him amusement; and only resumed his itinerant habits at rare intervals, and when an opportunity offered of extending his journey to a considerable distance. "All that blooms must fade;" and even this cheap and simple source of pleasure became unattainable. We have seen, however, how keenly he enjoyed his season of free and idle intercourse with nature; and all who know his works must feel how much of their amusement they owe to his gipsy strolls.

So far we have proceeded upon the authority of the humble but worthy attendant of these rambles; what follows is from the pen of Sir Walter himself, and as a record of an autumnal excursion during the year 1797, seems here fitly in place. It relates to David Ritchie, the unfortunate creature whose peculiarities of form and fortune suggested the Black Dwarf. It will appear how feeble the hint which set Scott's inventive genius to manufacture that wayward incarnation of morbid sentiment. "The author saw this poor, and it may be said, unhappy man, in autumn 1797. Being then, as he has the happiness still to remain, connected by ties of intimate friendship with the family of the venerable Dr. Adam Fergusson, the philosopher and historian, who then resided at the mansion house of Halyards, in the vale of Manor, about a mile from Ritchie's hermitage, the author was upon a visit at Halyards, which lasted for several days, and was made acquainted with this singular anchorite, whom Dr. Fergusson considered as an extraordinary character, and whom he assisted in various ways, particularly by the loan of books. Though the taste of the philosopher and the poor pea-

sant did not, it may be supposed, always correspond,\* Dr. Fergusson considered him as a man of powerful capacity and original ideas, but whose mind was thrown off its just bias, by a predominant degree of self-love and self-opinion, galled by the sense of ridicule and contempt, and avenging itself upon society, in idea at least, by a gloomy misanthropy." Concerning this unfortunate man, the perpetuator of his memory elsewhere tells us, "He was bred a brush maker at Edinburgh, and had wandered to several places, working at his trade, from all which he was chased by the disagreeable attention which his hideous singularity of form and face attracted wherever he came. The author understood him to say he had even been in Dublin." It appears from this statement, that Scott's personal intercourse with the prototype of "Cannie Elshie" was limited to one interview. The personal appearance of the dwarf might make a lasting impression upon him, but the unfortunate being's mind he saw through the medium of the opinions of Dr. Fergusson. This fact will afford room for comment when the first of *My Landlord's Tales* comes to form part of our history.

While thus engaged in the active pursuits of life, and in frequent and attentive perusals of the great book of nature, Scott had by no means relaxed in his attention to books of a less metaphorical nature. His German studies he continued to prosecute, although under considerable disadvantage. The literary intercourse between this country and the continent was at that time extremely languid. German works in particular were all but inaccessible. Mr. Constable, however, the future Jonathan Oldbuck, procured for his young friend an *Adelung's Dictionary* through the mediation of Father Pepper, a monk of the Scottish College of Ratisbon; and his friend Mrs. Scott of Harden, by her connections with the continent, procured for him from time to time, in addition to his first love, Burger, the principal works of Schiller, Goethe, and La Motte Fouque. We have already had occasion to notice Scott's account of his method of studying the language: he "was in the practice of fighting his way to the knowledge of the German by his acquaintance with the Scottish and Anglo Saxon dialects, and of course frequently committed blunders." We are consequently prepared to acquiesce in the truth of his statement with regard to the use he made of these treasures, when he says:—"Being thus furnished with the necessary originals, I began to translate on all sides, certainly without any thing like an accurate knowledge of the language." A more minute account of the direction which his studies took, is given in these words:—"I pur-

\* "I remember," says Sir Walter, "David was particularly anxious to see a book, which he called, I think, *Letters to the Elect Ladies*, and which, he said, was the best composition he had ever read; but Dr. Fergusson's library did not supply the volume."

sued the German language keenly, and though far from being a correct scholar, became a bold and daring reader, nay even translator of various dramatic pieces from that tongue."

One of these translations he gave to the public early in 1799:—Goethe's "Gotz of Berlichingen." As the translation of this tragedy, however, seems to have been executed some time previous to its publication, and as our remarks respecting the translator's success are chiefly meant to throw light upon the degree of development attained by his literary faculties at the period of his career we have now approached, this seems the most proper time for submitting them to the reader. The degree of tact shown in apprehending his author's drift, the degree of power evinced in clothing his author's thoughts in English idioms, afford no mean test of the translator's proficiency in the art of poetry. In order, however, that this test may be fairly applied, it will be necessary to preface our criticism of the translation with a few words regarding the peculiar character of the original.

The literary tone of Goethe's writings, as of those of all authors, owes its peculiar character in part to the natural constitution of his mind, in part to the impress of the circumstances among which it ripened. His master-feeling, that which remains unaltered in every mood of his mind, is an intense, voluptuous, delicate, tranquil sense of the beautiful. His intellect is of that class which notes accurately every object presented to its observation in the most minute details, and strives at the same time to detect the place which it holds in the universal order of existences, and to trace the links by which it is bound to them. This intellect, however, is speculative, not practical. Even in his age of creation and destruction, that age which gave birth to the first tremendous revolutionary earthquake, the throes and heavings of which have not yet completed their work of renovation, Goethe was scarcely for a moment carried along by the current of popular enthusiasm. He felt from the first, what his vocation was, to mirror in the fairer forms of poetry the figures that passed before him in the ever shifting magic-lantern of busy life. He mingled, it is true, from time to time, in every pursuit which interests man; he was by turns artist, philosopher, statesman, soldier, and lawyer. But he trode every path

---

like a child at a feast,  
Which but sips at a sweet, and then flies to the rest.

He returned from all his desultory excursions into the various provinces of busy life, to cast in the mould of poetry enduring images of the transient emotions which he had experienced.

The circumstances under the influence of which these mental elements were evolved and strengthened into character, were sufficiently varied

and exciting. He was born and brought up amid the decorous and monotonous routine of the life then led by the decent burghers of the Imperial Free Towns of Germany. His father, however, a wealthy idle man, who had seen the world, devoted himself to the education of his children, and in particular of his only son. The boy's memory, judgment, and perseverance, were incessantly kept in exercise from his earliest years. He was encouraged to expatiate over the whole wide field of knowledge, which was then alluring as many and as sanguine cultivators, as the backwoods of America do now. And what had a strong influence over the whole of his future life, he was encouraged to cultivate a knowledge of and taste for art, which had become one of his father's hobbies during a visit he had paid to Italy in his youth. Goethe being destined to the profession of the law, was sent, in due time, first to the university of Leipzig, and subsequently to that of Strasburg. At the former, besides acquiring such a knowledge of his prospective avocation as enabled him to pass muster before paternal enquiries respecting his proficiency, he formed an intimate acquaintance with the somewhat tame German literature of the day, and mastered by sedulous study the views of the philosophy of art, promulgated by Winkelman. At the latter, he became versant in the writings of the Encyclopædists, and caught at the same time a spark of the enthusiasm with which Herder was then treading in the footsteps of Dr. Percy.

Upon a mind thus naturally susceptible and carefully trained, the giant phenomena of the moral and political world around him made a deep impression. While Goethe was yet a mere child, his native city, Frankfort, was, in the course of the seven years' war, taken possession of by the French troops, and their commander was quartered in his father's house. His infant ears rung with the noise of battle, and his infant eyes dwelt upon the comings and goings of eminent military and diplomatic characters. His attention was thus directed to the stately march of political events even before he could comprehend its importance. He entered upon his legal studies at a time when the amelioration of existing institutions had begun to be keenly canvassed, even by practical jurists. And although this had not been the case, still his familiarity with the writings of Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau, must have taught him that a new spirit had awakened upon earth, and was struggling to break through the trammels of old forms. But the fact that the old fabric of society, in his own land, as elsewhere, was breaking down about the ears of those who had found shelter beneath it, was brought yet more palpably home to his conviction, when he was sent to reside at Wetzlar, with a view to the completion of his practical studies. An Imperial Visitation had at the period of his arrival been sitting for some years in that town, investigating the causes of the tardiness and insuffi-

ciency of the proceedings in the highest court of appeal in the empire (*das Reichs-Kammergericht*). The enquiries of the commission, like those of all its predecessors, led to no practical result, but directed the attention of the young jurist to the rise and consolidation of the civil institutions of his native land. The gigantic but ill-strung body of the German empire lay before him as on a dissecting-table. The book of his country's history was opened, and a series of pictures uncovered to his apprehensive imagination, representing attempts to establish a feudal monarchy over a land far too broad for such an imperfect system of government, terminating in ill-concealed anarchy, and struggles to subject the minds of men to one universal faith, exploding into a wild chaos of bigotry and fanaticism. Amid these stormy scenes, his eye rested at times with delight upon the sturdy figures of high-minded and energetic men, labouring in their several spheres with more or less success, to establish or restore good government, and enforce the dictates of law, morality, and religion.

The inborn impulse of his nature forced Goethe to give vent to the thought and feelings fermenting in his mind in the form of fictitious narrative. "The result of all my reflections," he says, in his fragmentary autobiography, "was a return to my old determination, to explore both the external phenomena and the more recondite principles of nature, and to allow them to plead their own cause in pictures painted in a kindly spirit. For this purpose, which haunted me night and day, two great, I may almost say gigantic masses of materials presented themselves, the wealth of which I needed only partially to appreciate, to enable me to work them up into something valuable. They were—that earlier age in which Gotz of Berlichingen lived, and my own, the sickly bloom of which is painted in Werter." Accordingly, both of these strikingly contrasted works were composed about the same time. Leaving Werther to the appreciation of others, our business is with the older and sterner hero.

Goethe's general qualifications for the composition of a historical drama, are sufficiently apparent from what has been here premised. Of his studies, undertaken with an immediate reference to that enterprise, he has himself given us an account. "The darker centuries of German history had excited my curiosity and imagination from an early age. The desire to represent Gotz of Berlichingen and his age in a dramatic form, was one of my favourite ideas. I read diligently the principal authors; in particular I fixed my attention upon Von Datt's treatise, 'De Pace Publica;' I studied it anxiously, and familiarized myself with its strange peculiarities." He elsewhere remarks:—"My enduring interest in Shakspeare's works had so widened my conceptions, that the narrow stage, and the brief interval of a dramatic

representation, seemed to me far too limited for the production of any great effect. The life of honest Gotz, written by himself, lured me into an historical arrangement, and my imagination expanded so much, that my dramatic form outgrew the narrow limits of the theatre, and approached close and more closely to a counterpart of living events." After this fashion he brooded over his subject for several years, viewing it in every light, and talking over his projected work with a favourite sister. At last the affectionate railing of that amiable and accomplished lady forced him to take the pen in his hand, and the first sketch of his drama was accomplished in an inconceivably short space of time. He threw it aside, and on again taking it to hand, after a considerable interval, found that it required to be almost entirely remodeled. "The first act was tolerably successful, but in the rest, and especially towards the close of the piece, a fantastic passion had unconsciously misled me. In my endeavours to paint Adelaide in the most pleasing colours, I had fairly fallen in love with her, and involuntarily my pen had been devoted exclusively to her. The charms of the woman had thrown the real hero completely into the shade, and the interest attached to her fate swallowed up every other." With inconceivable power of self-denial, a quality in which no man ever surpassed Goethe, he ruthlessly lopped away every leaf and blossom of luxuriant passionate poetry, and transformed his play into a representation of real life, in which the ruling passion of love only maintains its due place amid the more manly and robust emotions of human nature.

Gotz von Berlichingen accordingly remains the central figure, the point to which all other parts of the picture bear a reference, the hero who gives unity to the whole. He is a masculine spirit, pious and honourable by nature and education, rude and hardy by constant exercise. For himself he reveres the laws, and the emperor their representative, and seeks to square his actions to them; but when injured, the constitution of the land recognises his right to eke out the deficiencies of a defective police by the aid of his good sword, and his natural disposition, and the knowledge that "his father did so before him," renders him noways averse to the alternative. He lives, however, in an age of transition. The light of more effective institutions, and a more refined and complicated system of law, has glimmered into Germany from Italy, and has found worshippers. The Emperor Maximilian, one of the noblest monarchs who ever mounted the thorny throne of the holy Roman empire, seeks to consolidate the state, overlooking, however, in his anxiety for peace, the rights of his subjects. The electors wish each to be masters in their own territories, disregarding alike the rights of their feudal superior, and of their vassals. The majority of the free-barons have degenerated under the system of self-aid into mere robbers.

The peasantry, ill-fed and worse taught, are animated by the desire to change places with their lordly oppressors, were it but to taste one day of vengeance, and then sink in common ruin. To add to the confusion produced by the re-action of these anarchical principles, the faith hallowed in the minds of men by immemorial reverence has been attacked; the fat unwieldy priesthood has been startled from its doze, by the vehement oburgations of the apostles of a purer doctrine, mingling with the yells of those who hunger for their wealth. The character sustained by Gotz amid all this confusion is one of the most interesting that can well be conceived,—the character of a plain blunt man, who, without seeing his way clearly amid the perplexities that environ him, by dint of sheer rectitude of principle and firmness of purpose, succeeds uniformly in selecting and persevering in the right path. He struggles on through darkness and danger, and although he sinks at last broken-hearted, conscious honesty alleviates his last pangs, and friend and foe combine to bewail his loss. The other characters of the play, aiding in the development of the story, (plot properly speaking there is none,) are struck out in brief indications, with a bold yet discriminating pencil. The bishop and the abbot, alike voluptuous and effeminate, yet the former elevated by high reaching ambition; Weislingen, with generous sentiment but infirm of purpose, and inveigled by the blandishments of a woman and the favour of a prince; Sickingen, bold and generous, but in imminent danger of being misled by success into selfish ambition; the splendid Adelheid, sparkling at once in beauty and destruction; the gentle Mary, and the housewively Elizabeth,—nay, the gallant Lerse,—the brave George,—the good brother Martin, have each of them a marked individual character. The element in which they move is a drama; such a drama as Shakspeare would have made of the subject, requiring the world for a stage, and years for its time of action. The scene shifts, the characters enter, utter a few simple words, which suggest, however, boundless wealth of thought, and walk off again. Some of these scenes contain merely a few speeches of a few words each, and no care is taken by the author to hint at the nature of their connection. Yet we feel that they are organic parts of a mighty whole,—we rise from the perusal of the drama with an intimate knowledge of the age into which we have wandered. With like unapparent effort the moral beauties of that age are made to stand out from its sombre background, each in simple reliance upon its own worth, enhancing, not rivaling, the value of its fellows. This splendid edifice is reared upon a deep study of society and human character, but the philosopher nowhere obtrudes himself. Every thing is characteristic, every thing is in keeping, but if we feel this, it is upon after-reflection; we are too much engrossed with what is passing before our eyes, too much im-



pressed with a transitory belief in its reality, to have time for such reflections.

We have been describing a work which in its *aesthetical* character bears a striking resemblance to those productions upon which Scott's fame mainly rests. It is a re-animating of dry bones of former times—a revival in their living bloom of dead ages of the author's land. Laying out of view the unimportant difference that *Gotz of Berlichingen* is dramatic in its form, while the *Waverley* novels are narratives, we can find no further distinction between them. Goethe in his play did for Germany what Scott in his best novels did for Scotland. It is therefore a strong indication that the mind of the latter had not, at the time this drama fell into his hands, obtained its full maturity, that he failed to feel its full merits. That the political lesson it unconsciously imparts should have escaped him, is no ways wonderful. Goethe, although, with many of the best spirits of Germany, he eventually threw himself into the arms of the aristocratic party, was a bold enquirer, and the very reverse of a bigot. Circumstances too had brought him into close contact with the machinery of state. Scott, on the other hand, had thrown himself, with the blind vehemence of youth, into the ranks of the British Tories, the most narrow-minded politicians of the age. They could not argue themselves, and they would not allow any other person to enquire or argue. Dogged adherence to what was established, be it right or be it wrong, deep, bitter, and enduring hatred of every opponent, was what they required. Enthralled to such a sway, there is little room to wonder at his misunderstanding the fine picture of society and manners presented to him. He was forbidden to examine society with such an observant gaze as would have enabled him to recognise its picture. His blindness in this respect has led him into a rather curious blunder. In his preface to the translation of *Gotz* we find the following sentence:—"Some liberties have been taken with the original, in omitting two occasional disquisitions upon the civil law as practised in Germany." This is almost as good as if a German translator of the *Waverley* novels were to exclude Jonathan Oldbuck's learned dissertation on the hill-fort of Quickeusbog, on the ground that it could only be interesting to the local antiquary, or Major Dalgetty's reveries, concerning the extraction of the square root, on the ground that they were "occasional disquisitions on military tactics as practised in Scotland."

There was, however, something in the rude powers which are attributed to the heroes, and in the blunt bearing of old *Gotz* himself, that captivated the translator, from its external similarity to the bluff heroes of his border legends. There was the same coarse strength, the same iron nerves, the same healthy relish of the feast and the wine-cup. He failed, however, to recognise the faint glimmer of a nobler principle,

which, though as yet but a spark, was beginning to glow ruddily through the mists of their earthly feelings. Gotz says, when sharing his last morsel and last drop of wine with his faithful followers:—"I love the emperor; our fate is the same; and I am yet luckier than he. He must catch mice to please the states, while the rats are gnawing at his *gear*. I know he often wishes for death rather than to remain longer the soul of such a ricketty body (fills their glasses). 'Twill just go round again. And when our blood runs low, as this wine pours first in a thinner thread and then drop by drop, (pours the last drop into his own glass,) what shall be our last word?" George, "Freedom." All, "Freedom." This is the true key to the nobility of soul displayed by Gotz and the better characters of the piece. They sighed for the introduction of just laws, but even these they would not purchase by the surrender of their independence. They felt instinctively that the men who proffered such a bargain, had not justice but their own selfish ends in view. This was a flight above the Border Reavers.

But in catching the more delicate traits of character, Scott has failed to a degree that is absolutely ludicrous. One instance may suffice for many. When the bishop is despatching his creature, Liebetraut, to wile back Weislingen to Bamberg, the following conversation takes place between the courier and the lady Adelheid:—

"*Liebetraut*. Dare I mix your name with these matters, lady?

*Adelheid*. In a modest way.

*Liebetraut*. That is a pretty extensive commission.

*Adelheid*. Know you me so little, or are you so young as not to know in what tone I would have you speak of me to Weislingen?

*Liebetraut*. In that of a bird-call, I should think.

*Adelheid*. Pshaw!"

In Scott's version, the last allusion is positively sublime:—

"*Liebetraut*. May I venture to use your name, gracious lady?

*Adelheid*. Aye, with all manner of propriety.

*Liebetraut*. Know you that's a wide commission?

*Adelheid*. Know you not my rank and sex sufficiently, to understand in what tone I am to be spoken of to an unknown nobleman?

*Liebetraut*. *In the tone of a speaking trumpet, think I."*

Perhaps his blindness to these fine *nuances* may have been owing to imperfect acquaintance with the language, of which many traces occur. Certain it is, however, that neither from any feeling of the beauties of the original, nor from any peculiar talent for echoing its simple and often quaint felicity of expression in English idioms, could this translation be regarded as prophetic of superior genius. The preface is the best part of the volume, and even it is remarkable for little more than a con-

siderable quantity of information expressed in a smooth and flowing style.

Another literary task accomplished in all probability about this period, although not allowed to see the light till a few years ago, may more properly be called a *rifacimento* than a translation. We allude to "The House of Aspen," formed upon the model of Veit Weber's "Heilige Vehme," from which Scott tells us he "borrowed the story and a part of the diction," while "the whole is compressed, and the incidents and dialogue occasionally much varied." This drama may therefore be considered as an intermediate step between his efforts in translation and in original composition. Viewing it in this light, we feel ourselves entitled to judge of its merits as a work entirely the author's own, without subjecting the reader's patience to such a perilous trial as the necessity of comparing copy and original, in order to gauge the capacity of the student, obliged us to impose upon him when speaking of Gotz of Berlichingen. This remark, however, we may be allowed to make, that, in the selection of a subject, he showed in the present instance the same crude unripened taste for fantastic horrors which had made him overlook the principal beauties of Gotz of Berlichingen in his admiration of its secondary merits. He incurred, in his version of that work, a share of the censure which Goethe has passed upon some of his own countrymen. "As the mass of the public is affected more by the material than the artist's skill, it was noways surprising that the sympathies of the young were chiefly excited in this manner. They regarded it as a banner, beneath which all that is wild and untamed in youth might allow itself free scope." Scott's memory can well afford to bear the burden of this youthful error, from the boldness with which in after-life he threw himself upon the unaided resources of our healthier emotions.

"The House of Aspen," is a tragedy of what is commonly called the German school. It relies for its effect upon romantic incident and the expression of violent passion, rather than upon portraiture of character. The men are all warriors, actuated some of them by virtuous, others by malignant motives, but not distinguished by any of those peculiarities which give individuality to character. As for the women, except that the elder expresses deep compunction for past actions, and that no such emotions are expressed by the younger, it would be difficult, but for the name prefixed, to distinguish the speeches of the one from those attributed to the other. There is, however, a stateliness and gloomy grandeur in the story. The incidents are skilfully selected, and we feel that the pageant, were it visibly presented to our eyes, would be in the highest degree imposing. In the closet, however, we are aware of the want of "words that burn." The expressions employed by the

persons of the drama are cold compared with what the circumstances warrant; and the frequent stage directions describing the gestures of the speakers do not compensate the deficiency.

The drama opens in the castle of Ebersdorf. Rodiger, its lord, is lamenting that his wounds incapacitate him from sharing the dangers of his sons, who are in the field opposed to a feudal enemy. His wife seeks to console him, but an allusion made by him to her former husband sinks her into deeper sadness than his own. We feel that a mystery hangs over her. The suspicion deepens into a foreboding that this mystery is allied to guilt during a conversation between the lady and her confessor, with which the first act closes. Our doubts are transformed into certainty in the second act. The squire of her eldest son, believing himself mortally wounded, confesses to his master that he had been his mother's agent in the murder of her first husband. This confession he repeats, on recovering from a swoon, to Count Roderic, the routed enemy of Aspen, under the impression that it is his master who still stands by his side. The Count and George of Aspen are both members of the secret tribunal, sworn to reveal and punish every deed of guilt that comes to their knowledge, and the beaten warrior sees in his victorious enemy's concealment of his mother's crime, a means of avenging himself by the hands of their mysterious brethren. He orders the wounded man to be carried to a place of concealment. In the third act the young baron of Aspen, who still clings to the hope that his attendant's tale may have been false, wrings from his mother a confession of her guilt. Filial piety, however, is triumphant over his oath to the secret avengers, and he resolves to save her at whatever hazard. Having learned that his squire has fallen into the hands of his enemy, his first step is to obtain possession of the person of this important witness; and for this purpose he despatches an itinerant minstrel in the disguise of a priest, to effect the vassal's liberation. The fourth act opens with Roderic's discovery of the escape of the prisoner, and his recognition of the brother of the murdered husband of the baroness in the person of the minstrel who effected the liberation. They unite to obtain their common revenge. The baroness is cited to appear before the secret tribunal, and George, as a last effort, despatches his brother to invoke the aid of the Duke of Bavaria, chief of the order. The fifth act passes in the subterranean chapel where the conclave is assembled. One of the members rises, and accuses George of Aspen of concealment of guilt divulged to him, contrary to his oath. Proof being demanded, he uncovers his face: it is George, who seeks by surrendering himself to the dagger to screen his mother. He is led off to execution, and the baroness is introduced. Her husband is brought forward to be examined, and unable to endure the disclosure of her guilt in his presence,

she stabs herself. In the president of the tribunal, Rodiger recognises by his voice his hereditary foe. By the laws of the tribunal, any uninitiated person discovering a member must join their body or suffer death. While they are deliberating on the fate of old Aspen, the Duke of Bavaria enters, accuses Roderic of perverting the laws of the order to gratify his own malice, deposes him from his office of president, and degrades him from the rank of knight. The drama closes with his princely promise to build up the broken fortunes of the house of Aspen.

It must appear, even from this hasty sketch, that the incidents of the drama are skilfully and elegantly arranged. Some of the scenes are extremely successful. The stern harsh deportment of the baroness, in her interview with the priest is striking. A night scene at an out-post, where the sentinels are startled in the middle of a ghost-story by the approach of Martin, (George's squire,) followed up, as it is, by the seizure of that worthy by two familiars of the tribunal, in the immediate vicinity of the marsh where he had gathered the hemlock to drug his master's cup, curdles the blood. There is a cold and stately horror about the scene in the chapel, where the baroness is summoned to appear before her judges. Still the absence of warm human feeling chills and enfeebles the whole play. The language is good racy English. We are repeatedly struck with the bold intermixture of the ludicrous and horrible, a taste for which Scott seems at that time to have imbibed from his favorite German authors. In the song of triumph raised by the followers of Aspen we recognise the versification, if not the beautiful flow of imagery, which afterwards captivated the world in the boat-song of Roderic Dhu's vassals. A yet more curious coincidence occurs. It is understood that the author of the Waverley novels was on some occasions consulted by one of the play-wrights who dramatised his stories. In *Rob Roy*, as acted, the Cataran turns upon his cousin the Bailie:—"To hear the night-bird scream! Will you listen to her bodings; now the mist is on the brae and the spirit of the Gregarach walks?" In the house of Aspen the following speech is put in the mouth of a retainer of Count Roderic:—"Count Roderic of Maltingen greets you. He says he will this night hear the bat flutter and the owlet scream; and he bids me ask if thou also wilt listen to the music?" Something like a connecting link between the two passages may perhaps be traced in two lines of Macgregor's gathering song:—

The moon's on the lake and the mist's on the brae,  
And the clan has a name that is nameless by day.

A metrical version of some verses of "*das Rheinwein Lied*" introduced into "the House of Aspen," is executed in a pleasing and simple manner.

What makes the troopers' frozen courage muster?  
 The grapes of juice divine.  
 Upon the Rhine, upon the Rhine they cluster:  
 Oh blessed be the Rhine!

Let fringe and furs and many a rabbit skin, sirs,  
 Bedeck your Saracen,  
 He'll freeze without what warms our hearts within, sirs,  
 When the night-frost crusts the fen;

But on the Rhine, but on the Rhine they cluster,  
 The grapes of juice divine,  
 That make our troopers' frozen courage muster:  
 Oh blessed be the Rhine!

On the whole, the drama is evidently the production of an accomplished and elegant mind, although it would be difficult to trace in it any emanations of that genius which blazed out a few years later.

Dramatic composition held, however, only a second place in Scott's affections. The first continued sacred to ballad poetry. After frequent essays in imitations and translations from the German, he ventured to attempt an original poem in a similar style. The scene selected for his *coup d'essai*, was Glenfinlas, a tract of forest-ground, to the westward of the Troshachs, subsequently the most triumphant of his battle-fields—a locality with which his early visits to the country had rendered him tolerably familiar. The tradition which he sought to embody in his verses is simply this:—"While two Highland hunters were passing the night in a solitary *bothy*, (a hut built for the purpose of hunting,) and making merry over their venison and whiskey, one of them expressed a wish that they had pretty lasses to complete their party. The words were scarcely uttered, when two beautiful young women, habited in green, entered the hut, dancing and singing. One of the hunters was seduced by the syren who attached herself particularly to him, to leave the hut; the other remained, and, suspicious of the fair seducers, continued to play upon a trumpet or Jew's harp some strain consecrated to the Virgin Mary. Day at length came, and the temptress vanished. Searching in the forest, he found the bones of his unfortunate friend, who had been torn to pieces and devoured by the fiend into whose hands he had fallen. The place was thence called the Glen of the Green Women." This tale suggested the ballad of "Glenfinlas," or Lord Ronald's Coronach.

The opening stanza strikes a chord of rude but stately wailing.

O hone a rie! O hone a rie!  
 The pride of Albin's line is o'er,  
 And fallen Glenartney's stateliest tree;  
 We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more.

The night-quarters occupied by the two chiefs during their hunting excursion is beautifully painted. It bespeaks an observant eye and delicate sense of the charms of nature; contrasting in this respect most advantageously with the common-place description of moonlight in Lord Byron's early attempt of a similar kind, "Oscar of Alva."

In gray Glenfinlas' deepest nook  
The solitary cabin stood,  
Fast by Moneira's sullen brook,  
Which murmurs through that lonely wood.

Soft fell the night, the sky was calm,  
When three successive days had flown;  
And summer mist in dewy balm  
Steep'd heathy bank and mossy stone.

The moon, half hid in silvery flakes,  
Afar her dubious radiance shed,  
Quivering on Katrine's distant lakes,  
And resting on Benledi's head.

There is a wild thrilling interest in the visit of the fair fiend to Moy when left alone by his companion, to which the versification responds admirably in some passages.

Within an hour return'd each hound;  
In rush'd the rousers of the deer;  
They howl'd in melancholy sound,  
Then closely couch beside the seer.

No Ronald yet; though midnight came,  
And sad were Moy's prophetic dreams,  
As, bending o'er the dying flame,  
He fed the watch-fire's quivering gleams.

Sudden the hounds erect their ears,  
And sudden cease their moaning howl;  
Close press'd to Moy, they mark their fears  
By shivering limbs and stifled growl.

Untouch'd the harp began to ring,  
As softly, slowly, ope'd the door;  
And shook responsive every string,  
As light a footstep press'd the floor.

And by the watch-fire's glimmering light,  
Close by the minstrel's side, was seen  
An huntress maid, in beauty bright,  
All dropping wet her robes of green.

All dropping wet her garments seem;  
 Chill'd was her cheek, her bosom bare,  
 As bending o'er the dying gleam,  
 She wrung the moisture from her hair.

The conclusion of the interview is touched with a bolder hand.

He mutter'd thrice St. Oran's rhyme,  
 And thrice St. Fillan's powerful prayer;  
 Then turn'd him to the eastern clime,  
 And sternly shook his coal-black hair.

And bending o'er his harp, he flung  
 His wildest witch-notes in the wind;  
 And loud and high and strange they rung,  
 As many a magic change they find.

Tall wax'd the spirit's altering form,  
 Till to the roof her stature grew;  
 Then mingling with the rising storm,  
 With one wild yell away she flew.

Rain beats, hail rattles, whirlwinds tear,  
 The slender hut in fragments flew;  
 But not a lock of Moy's loose hair  
 Was waved by wind or wet by dew.

Wild mingling with the howling gale  
 Loud bursts of ghastly laughter rise;  
 High o'er the minstrel's head they sail,  
 And die amid the northern skies.

The ballad is wound up by a repetition of the same stately cadence with which it commenced.

Scott's satisfaction with the manner in which he had executed "Glenfinlas," induced him to comply with the request of his kinsman of Harden to compose another ballad. The old tower of Smailholm, near which the poet's early days were passed, has already been alluded to. During the proprietor's absence some idle person had torn the iron-grating door from its hinges, and thrown it down the rock. Scott was an earnest suitor that the mischief should be repaired, and compliance with his request was promised under the condition that he should make a ballad, the scene of which should lie at the tower and among the crags amid which it is placed. This was the origin of "The Eve of St. John," a ballad of much deeper interest and more varied melody than "Glenfinlas." The story is well known. The following extracts may serve as specimens of the success with which it is told.

\* \* \* \* \*



My lady each night sought the lonely light,  
That burns on the wild watchfold;  
For from height to height the beacon bright  
Of the English foeman told.

The bitter clamour'd from the moss,  
The wind blew loud and shrill,  
Yet the craggy pathway she did cross  
To the eiry Beacon Hill.

I watch'd her steps, and silent came  
Where she sat her on a stone;  
The watchman stood by the dreary flame,  
It burned all alone.

The second night I kept her in sight  
Till to the fire she came,  
And, by Mary's might! an armed knight  
Stood by the lonely flame.

And many a word that warlike lord  
Did speak to my lady there;  
But the rain fell fast, and loud blew the blast,  
And I heard not what they were.

\* \* \* \*

"At the lone midnight hour, when bad spirits have power,  
In thy chamber will I be."  
With that he was gone, and my lady left alone,  
And no more did I see.

Then changed, I trow, was that bold baron's brow,  
From the dark to the blood-red high;  
"Now tell me the mien of the knight thou hast seen,  
For by Mary he shall die!"

"His arms shone full bright in the beacon's red light,  
His plume it was scarlet and blue;  
On his shield was a hound, in a silver leash bound,  
And his crest was a branch of the yew."

"Thou liest, thou liest, thou little foot-page;  
Loud dost thou lie to me!  
For that knight is cold, and low laid in the mould  
All under the Eildon tree."

"Yet hear but my word, my noble lord!  
For I heard her name his name;  
And that lady bright, she called the knight  
Sir Richard of Coldinghame."

"The bold baron's brow then changed I trow  
From high blood-red to pale—

"The grave is deep and dark—and the corpee is stiff and stark;  
I may not trust thy tale.

"Where fair Tweed flows round holy Melrose,  
And Eildon slopes to the plain,  
Full three nights ago, by some secret foe,  
That gay gallant was slain.

"The varying light deceived thy sight,  
And the wild winds drown'd the name;  
For the Dryburgh bells ring, and the white monks do sing,  
For Sir Richard of Coldinghame."—  
\* \* \* \*

"Now hail, now hail, thou lady bright!  
Now hail, thou baron true!  
What news, what news, from Ancram fight?  
What news from the bold Buccleuch?"

"The Ancram moor is red with gore,  
For many a southern fell;  
And Buccleuch has charged us, evermore,  
To watch our beacons well."

The lady blush'd red, but nothing she said;  
Nor added the baron a word;  
Then she stept down the stair to her chamber fair,  
And so did her moody lord.

In sleep the lady mourn'd, and the baron toss'd and turn'd,  
And oft to himself he said—  
"The worms around him creep, and his bloody grave is deep—  
It cannot give up the dead!"

It was near the ringing of matin-bell,  
The night was well nigh done,  
When a heavy sleep on that baron fell,  
On the eve of good St. John.

The lady look'd through the chamber fair,  
By the light of a dying flame;  
And she was aware of a knight stood there—  
Sir Richard of Coldinghame!

"Alas! away, away!" she cried,  
"For the holy virgin's sake!"  
"Lady, I know who sleeps by thy side;  
But, lady, he will not awake."  
\* \* \* \*

In perusing these two ballads, we become aware that the imagination of the poet has made an immense stride towards maturity. In "Glenfinlas," we find, doubtless, many traces of that conventional monotony,

which chills and represses the rich gush of young genius, as the lingering frosts of winter dwarf the spring-flowers awakening into life. The versification reminds us, by its tame uniformity, strongly of Cumnor Hall. The arbitrary transformation of the heroes into chieftains has rendered necessary a violation of costume which the author himself acknowledges. "In one point, the incidents of the poem were irreconcilable with the costume of the times in which they were laid. The ancient Highland chieftains, when they had a mind to 'hunt the dun deer down,' did not retreat into solitary bothies, or trust the success of the chase to their own unassisted exertions, without a single gillie to help them; they assembled their clan, and all partook of the sport, forming a ring, or enclosure, called the Tinchal, and driving the prey towards the most distinguished persons of the hunt. This course would not have suited me; so Ronald and Moy were cooped up in their solitary wigwam, like two moorfowl shooters of the present day." But the liberty taken with the simplicity of the original legend is blamable for another reason to which the author no where adverts. It indicates ignorance of the real source of poetic emotion. The true poet does not reject rank and adventitious ornament, but neither does he seek them; he relies upon the voice and gesture of passion, in whatever breast it may be awakened. By his tacit admission, that he thought the tale of the green woman unsusceptible of poetic ornament, unless told of two chieftains, Scott shows himself ignorant of what really lends it its wild thrilling interest. He approaches to the blunder of the authors of fairy tales in the old time, and fashionable novels in our own, who imagine that all interest centres in the coach and six, instead of the person who rides in it. But although Scott has by this means transferred the living story into a dead trunk, his genius has perhaps unawares hung it with some wreaths of real poetry. The description of the moonlight, which we have quoted above, is a leaf borrowed from nature—cool, fresh, and balmy. The visit of the unearthly female is a passage of more dazzling though less healthy beauty. And there bursts at times a bold trumpet-note above the tiresome level of the sing-song stanza which he has adopted.

"The Eve of St. John" stands, as a poem, immeasurably above "Glenfinlas." It is instinct with life; rough, warm, and bold. Even the rude carelessness of the versification is refreshing; for it shows that the author has burst the frail fetters that bound him; and its continually recurring passages of inartificial melody are enhanced by the contrast. There is power in the tale. The very elements are swayed and directed by a master of his art, who bends their soulless workings to his purposes. The persons of the brief drama are vividly sketched, and stand out in bold relief from each other; the dark stern baron, the gay and

finical knight, the frail but lovely lady, the shriveled imp of a page. We lurk with the boy behind a crag, and see the knight and the lady converse by the ruddy but uncertain gleam of the beacon-fire, while the gusts of elemental strife that rave and eddy round them drown their words. We see the deep blush and downcast eye of the lady, when her lord hints at the watching on the beacon-hill, and follow the tread of the silent but thoughtful pair to their chamber. The noiseless apparition of the murdered knight is ghastly; and, were he not too voluble and diffuse in his conversation for a spirit, would be one of the most impressive ghost scenes on record. In short, "The Eve of St. John" is a genuine product of the imagination as defined by Wordsworth;\* it is an emanation from a creative mind. In all the former productions of Scott which we have had occasion to notice, we find traces of a richly stored mind,—in this do we first discover power and originality. Most probably he was not aware of the importance of the task to which he set himself, when, good-humouredly complying with the request of his cousin, he set himself to frame a tale as free from the constraint of critical rules as the lawless metre in which it was told. This is not a solitary instance of a great mind first revealing its real character in the license of a genial hour, when indulging to the top of its bent some wayward humour.

These two ballads, although not published, were circulated pretty widely in manuscript, and acquired for their author a considerable local reputation. As his military exertions had earned for him the patronage of one of the leading statesmen of the day, so his first essays in the art

\* "Imagination has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon these objects, and processes of creation or composition, governed by certain fixed laws. \* \* \* Certain processes of the imagination are carried on either by conferring additional properties upon an object, or abstracting from it some of those which it actually possesses, and thus enabling it to react upon the mind which hath performed the process like a new existence. \* \* \* But the imagination also shapes and creates; and how? By innumerable processes; and in none does it more delight than in that of consolidating numbers with unity, and dissolving and separating unity from number,—alterations proceeding from and governed by sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers. \* \* \* I shall spare myself and the reader the trouble of considering the imagination as it deals with thoughts and sentiments, as it regulates the composition of character, and determines the course of actions. I will not consider it (more than I have already done by implication,) as that power which, in the language of one of my most esteemed friends, 'draws all things to one, which makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories, take one colour, and serve to one effect.'—*Preface to Wordsworth's Poems, 8vo edition.*

of poetry procured for him many marks of kindness and attention from the most eminent bibliomaniac of the age. John, Duke of Roxburghe, the collector of those volumes from which the Roxburghe Club derives its name, was so struck with their merits, that Scott became a welcome visiter at the princely mansion of Fleurs, and was allowed unlimited access to the owner's books. Thus his taste for old literature, and the aristocratical bias of his mind, were at once gratified and confirmed. He has somewhere asserted,—“It is a mistake to suppose that my situation in life or place in society were materially altered by such success as I attained in literary pursuits.” But, notwithstanding this averment, it is pretty certain that had it not been for his poetical promise, the son of the Edinburgh writer would never have become an intimate visiter in the halls of Dalkeith and Fleurs. Be this, however, as it may, the flattering and delicate attentions of titled personages determined his mind in the aristocratical bias already communicated to it. Imagination had taught him to bow before nobility; the tone of the circles in which he had hitherto moved, had inspired him with a keen desire to become the champion of its privileges in the field; and now kindness and marked attention won his affections. From this moment aristocracy had “marked him for its own,”—an event which materially affected his progress in life, and still more the character and temper of his writings.

It is necessary, before quitting this branch of our subject, that we convey to the reader some notion of the reception which Scott's muse met with at the hands of the limited public to which she was introduced, and its reaction upon his mind. This cannot better be done than in his own words:—“Thus I was set up for a poet like a pedlar who has got two ballads to begin the world upon, and I hastened to make the round of all my acquaintances, showing my precious wares, and requesting criticism,—a boon which no author asks in vain. For it may be observed, that in the fine arts, those who are in no respect able to produce any specimens themselves, hold themselves not the less entitled to decide upon the works of authors; and justly, no doubt, to a certain degree; for the merits of composition produced for the express purpose of pleasing the world at large, can only be judged of by the opinions of individuals, and perhaps, as in the case of Moliere's old woman, the less sophisticated the person consulted, so much the better. But I was ignorant at the time I speak of, that though the applause of the many may justly appreciate the general merits of a piece, it is not so safe to submit such a performance to the more minute criticism of the same individuals, when each, in turn, having seated himself in the censor's chair, has placed his mind in a critical attitude, and delivered his opinion sententiously and *ex cathedra*. General applause was in almost every case freely tendered, but the abatements in the way of proposed

alterations and corrections were cruelly puzzling. It was in vain the young author, listening with becoming modesty, and with a natural wish to please, cut and carved, and coopered and tinkered upon his unfortunate ballads,—it was in vain that he placed, displaced, replaced and misplaced; every one of his advisers was displeased with the concessions made to his co-assessors, and the author was blamed by some one, in almost every case, for having made two holes in attempting to patch up one.

“At last, after thinking seriously on the subject, I wrote out a fair copy, (of Glenfinlas, I think,) and marked all the various corrections that had been proposed. On the whole, I found that I had been required to alter every verse, almost every line, and the only stanzas of the whole ballad which escaped criticism were such as neither could be termed good nor bad, speaking of them as poetry, but were of a mere common-place character, absolutely necessary for conducting the business of the tale. This unexpected result, after about a fortnight's anxiety, led me to adopt a rule, from which I have seldom departed during more than thirty years of literary life. When a friend, whose judgment I respect, has decided, and upon good advisement told me, that a manuscript was worth nothing, or at least possessed no redeeming qualities sufficient to atone for its defects, I have generally cast it aside; but I am little in the habit of paying attention to minute criticisms, or of offering such to any friend who may do me the honour to consult me. I am convinced that, in general, in removing even errors of a trivial or a venial kind, the character of originality is lost, which upon the whole may be that which is most valuable in the production.”

It can have been only a short time after the event recounted in the above quotation, that the ballads in question fell into the hands of Monk Lewis, a specimen of whose criticism (expressed in letters to the author) is worthy of being preserved, as characteristic of the kind of literary Mentors, to whose tutelage Scott was subjected in his youth. “Thank you for revised ‘Glenfinlas.’ I *grumble*, but say no more on *this* subject, although I hope you will not be so inflexible on that of your other ballads; for I do not despair of convincing you in time, that a *bad* rhyme is, in fact, no rhyme at all. You desired me to point out my objections, leaving you at liberty to make use of them or not.” With this preface, he introduces some minute criticisms on the translated ballads which have been noticed above. His remarks upon “William and Helen” may serve for a sample.

“In order that I may bring it nearer the original title, pray introduce in the first stanza the name of Ellenora instead of Ellen. ‘*Crusade*’ and ‘*sped*’ not rhymes in the second. In the 4th, ‘*Joy*’ and ‘*victory*’ are not rhymes. 7th. The first line wants a verb, otherwise it is not

intelligible. 13th. 'Grace' and 'bliss' are not rhymes. 14th. 'Bale' and 'hell' are not rhymes. 16th. 'Vain' and 'fruitless' is tautology; and as a verb is wanted, the line will run better thus, 'And vain is every prayer.' 19th. Is not 'to her' absolutely necessary in the fourth line? 20th. 'Grace' and 'bliss' not rhymes. 21st. 'Bale' and 'hell' not rhymes. 22d. I do not like the word '*spent*.' 23d. 'O'er' and 'star' are vile rhymes. 26th. A verb is wanted in the 4th line; better thus, 'When whispers thus a voice.' 28th. Is not 'Is't thou my love,' better than 'my love, my love.' 31st. If '*wight*' means, as I conjecture, '*enchanted*,' does not this let the cat out of the bag? Ought not the spur to be *sharp* rather than *bright*? In the fourth line, '*Stay*' and '*day*' jingle together; would it not be better, 'I must be gone ere day?' 32d. '*Steed*' and '*bed*' are not rhymes. 34th. '*Bride*' and '*bed*' are not rhymes. 35th. '*Seal*' and '*avail*' are not rhymes. 39th. '*Keep hold*' and '*sit fast*' seem to my ear vulgar and prosaic. 40th. The fourth line is defective in point of English; and indeed I do not quite understand the meaning. 43d. '*Arise*' and '*pursuers*' are not rhymes. 45th. I am not pleased with the epithet '*savage*;' and the latter part of the stanza is, to me, unintelligible. 49th. Is it not closer to the original in line third to say, 'Swift ride the dead?' 50th. Does the rain '*whistle*?' 55th, line third, Does it express, 'Is Helen afraid of them?' 59th. '*Door*' and '*flower*' do not rhyme together. 60th. '*Scared*' and '*heard*' are not rhymes. 63d. '*Bone*' and '*skeleton*' are not rhymes. 64th. The last line sounds ludicrous; one fancies the heroine coming down with a plump, and sprawling upon her bottom. I have now finished my severe examination, and pointed out every objection which I think can be suggested."

This is a bead-roll of blunders to cast in the teeth of a young versifier! It must have been edifying to have seen Scott perusing for the first time the letter which contained these cavalier strictures. The best of the joke is, that were every fault here pointed out removed, the essentials of the ballad would remain untouched. It might be an excellent poem with all these blemishes; it might not be worth a farthing even after they were removed. It is true, that a translation which can scarcely be regarded in a more important point of view than a metrical exercise, is more justly obnoxious to word-catching strictures than any other piece of composition. Lewis's remarks on "*Glenfinlas*" and "*St. John's Eve*," are rather more to the point.

"Your last ballad reached me just as I was stepping into my chaise to go to Bocket Hall, (Lord Melbourne's,) so I took it with me, and exhibited both that and *Glenfinlas* with great success. I must not, however, conceal from you, that nobody understood the *Lady Flora* of Glengyle to be a disguised demon till the catastrophe arrived; and that

the opinion was universal, that some previous stanzas ought to be introduced, descriptive of the nature and office of the *wayward Ladies of the Wood*. William Lambe, too, (who writes good verses himself, and therefore may be allowed to judge those of other people,) was decidedly for the omission of the last stanza but one. These were the only objections started. I thought it as well that you should know them, whether you attend to them or not. With regard to *St. John's Eve*, I like it much, and instead of finding fault with its broken metre, I approve of it highly. I think in this last ballad, you have hit off the ancient manner better than in your former ones. Glenfinlas, for example, is more like a polished tale than an old ballad. But why, in verse 6th, is the baron's helmet hacked and hewed, if, (as we are given to understand,) he had assassinated his enemy? Ought not *tore* to be *torn*? *Tore* seems to me not English. In verse 16th, the last line is word for word from *Gil Morrice*. 21st. 'Floor' and 'bower' are not rhymes," &c. &c.

It is evident from these letters that Lewis well deserved the designation, long afterwards conferred upon him by Scott, of "a martinet in the accuracy of rhymes and numbers." In the spirit of defiance to all criticism, however, which the pupil had adopted, the pertinacious lectures of the professor were for the time fruitless. Scott has himself told us that they "did not at the time produce any effect on his inflexibility; though," he adds, "I did not forget them at a future period." The mechanical dexterity, so indispensable to give decision and effect to the works even of genius, is always undervalued by youth.

We must now retrace our steps to take up again the dropped thread of Scott's personal adventures; for in tracing his literary career, we have shot somewhat ahead of his domestic history. We left him busied with cavalry manœuvres, and trials before the Court of Justiciary. These occupations, however, although they recommended him to the notice of the influential persons, who at a subsequent period materially forwarded the growth of his fortunes, were for the time productive of little emolument. Nay, the former, conjoined with his notorious literary habits, diminished not a little the respect which his talents might otherwise have infused into the solicitors and other agents, (*quocunque nomine gaudent*;) with whom lies in a great measure the dispensing of business in the parliament house. Our young advocate still continued to inhabit the paternal mansion, but it had ceased in a great measure to be a pleasant abode to him. His father, a man who by unrelaxing minute industry, had battled his way to fortune, was chagrined at what he accounted the indolence of his son. The more social habits, and freer language of the young man jarred upon the cherished prejudices of the inveterate formalist. Late hours, (late in comparison with those he had been accustomed to keep,) the frequenting of the theatre and yeomanry messes,



were in his eyes incompatible with the duties of the drudge of the law he fain would have transformed his son into. The ascetic principle continued to gain the ascendancy in the religious views of Mrs. Scott, and she too joined in the remonstrances, by which her partner succeeded in rendering home irksome to a mind inspired by robust health with a huge appetite for the innocent pleasures of society.

Like many worthy but narrow-minded people, they were in the habit of making their complaints against their children a frequent topic of their gossips with their favourite servants. At least one of the individuals to whom these confidential outpourings of bitterness were intrusted, ventured, on the strength of the length and fidelity of her services, to remonstrate with Walter. Being somewhat of a puritan, she even went further, and strove to open his eyes to the enormity of his conduct in defending persons accused of crimes. Once, when she was lifting her voice against the sin of pleading a bad cause, he told her:—"I have nothing to do with the badness of it; my business is to make it good." On another occasion he broke out with a complaint to the same good lady, which shows that with all his interest in other pursuits, he was as anxious for success in his avocation as those whose thoughts never traveled beyond it:—"One of my profession never gets flesh to eat till he has no teeth to eat it with." This delegation of the task of sermonising to menials must have been even more revolting to an ingenuous mind than the continually recurring paternal oburgations. More than one of his friends remember to have noted in him at this time a growing inclination to fly from home to the company of his favourite associates.

To these disagreeables another conjoined itself, the pressure of which has been felt by most men at one period of their life or another. The parsimonious allowance of his father, unaugmented by any gains of his own, was insufficient to meet the expenditure which the society he mingled with rendered unavoidable, and he was thus led to contract debts. The philosopher who seeks to estimate every evil by the real amount of its pressure, the poor man who has seen starvation look him gauntly in the face, may treat with derision the annoyances of one who was not exposed to actual penury, but they were teasing enough notwithstanding. There is something inexpressibly galling to a proud mind untamed by a long train of adversity, to a delicate mind rendered morbidly sensitive by being educated in the lap of comfort, to be assailed by creditors, and yet fear to have recourse to the severe friend upon whom alone it has a valid claim for relief. To the incessant gnawing of this petty misery, Scott had for some time been exposed, when the death of his uncle early in 1797, left him proprietor of Rosebank. The sale of the property relieved him from his trifling embarrassments; but

in getting rid of this source of annoyance he incurred another scarcely less provoking. All the old ladies of his acquaintance who had sympathised with the honest captain in his pride at the thought that his name should live in the land after his decease, set up their throats against the graceless nephew who had frustrated so fair a prospect. "Aunt Jenny had found men going about picking flowers, &c. before her brother was buried: agents to take possession for the debt or for the purchaser." One half of the stories told were lies, and the other half grossly exaggerated, but they were not the less annoying on that account. To make the matter worse, Aunt Jenny, in the kind simplicity of her soul, felt annoyed at the unavoidable frustration of her brother's favourite scheme, and a temporary coldness took place between her and her favourite nephew.

It was about this time that Scott paid a visit to the watering place of Gilsland, situated near the border in a wild uncultivated district of the north of England. The charitable tabbies he left behind him vowed that he had fled thither from the wrath of Aunt Jenny. This is too ridiculous; but there can be little doubt, that uncomfortably as he felt himself circumstanced at home, his natural inclination for visiting new scenes must have been greatly strengthened. It was here that he first met Miss Carpenter, whom he afterwards married.

Scott's amatory propensities never seem to have exercised such an undue influence over him as to interrupt his steady progress through life, with the staid uniform gait of external decorum. He was not however free, any more than his neighbours, from the visitations of that passion which swayed from his bias the wisest of men, and what is more, in a moral point of view, "the man after God's own heart." Like an eminent character between whom and our hero no stronger link of connexion exists than the apt expression of a sentiment,— "though there was no character he more despised than the mere man of pleasure, he was not an absolute Joseph neither."

But Scott, although no more privileged from lapses than other men, was of too noble a nature to abandon himself to the control of sensuality. He nourished a purer flame, and his first love flew a bold flight. It was fixed upon a daughter of Sir William Forbes, the same lady who afterwards married the late Glengary.\* The solid intrinsic value of a character like his rarely succeeds, however, in winning the affections of woman, which are more easily captivated by what is brilliant and striking. Without eminence of any kind, or personal charms to back his suit, he proved the fate of a rejected lover. It is not often

\* Another version assigns the honour of inspiring his first and slighted love to Miss Belshes of Invermay.

that we can trace the echo of Scott's personal feelings in his writings. They are, to a wonderful degree, free from a weakness incident to all his cotemporaries,—the morbid vehemence with which they thrust themselves and their individual feelings into the foreground of all their pictures. In his description, however, of the feelings of a rejected lover, we think that we can see the impress of experience more legibly than in any other passages of his works. The vague and careless indignation in which scorned love is apt to vent itself, has never been more truly depicted than in the persons of Frank Osbaldistone, Mordaunt Merton, and Markham Everard. But the growth and transference of his own passion is most apparently shadowed out in *Waverley*, upon whom the author has bestowed more of the attributes of his own character than any other of his heroes. Flora M'Ivor's vindication of Shakspeare's tact in drawing the character of Romeo, as being supposed to indicate, and in some measure occasion the transfer of *Waverley's* affections from herself to Rose Bradwardine, may form a not inappropriate mode of transition from this theme to the history of Scott's brief and uneventful course of love.

"The ladies, of course, declared loudly in favour of Romeo, but this opinion did not go undisputed. The mistress of the house, and several other ladies, severely reprobated the levity with which the hero transfers his affections from Rosalind to Juliet. Flora remained silent until her opinion was repeatedly requested, and then answered, she thought the circumstance objected to not only reconcilable to nature, but such as in the highest degree evinced the art of the poet. 'Romeo is described,' said she, 'as a young man, peculiarly susceptible of the softer passions; his love is at first fixed upon a woman who could afford it no return; this he repeatedly tells you,—

*From love's weak childish bow she lives uncharm'd;*

and again—

*She hath forsworn to love.*

Now, as it was impossible that Romeo's love, supposing him a reasonable being, could continue to subsist without hope, the poet has, with great art, seized the moment when he was reduced actually to despair, to throw in his way an object more accomplished than her by whom he was rejected, and who is disposed to repay this attachment. I can scarce conceive a situation more calculated to enhance the ardour of Romeo's affection for Juliet than his being at once raised by her from the state of drooping melancholy, in which he appears first upon the scene, to the ecstatic state in which he exclaims—

— come what sorrow can,  
It cannot countervail the exchange of joy  
That one short moment gives me in her sight.' "

This doctrine holds true, not only of such desperate innamoratoes as Romeo, but of more rational lovers also. And hence the impression made upon Mr. Walter Scott by Miss Margaret Charlotte Carpenter, who is described to us by an eye-witness as having been "a most lovely creature, with a profusion of dark hair, a fine pale skin, and an elegant and slender person." The lady was ostensibly the daughter of a merchant of Lyons, of the name of John Carpenter; but there were whisperers (never satisfactorily contradicted) that her nominal guardian, the Marquis of Downshire, stood in a closer affinity to her. She was amiable and accessible, and understood to have a portion of £400 per annum in her own right. These qualities, conjoined with her beauty, were no contemptible objects in the eyes of one who had passed the period when, to use his own words, "a youth is entering life, and rather looking out for some object whose affection may dignify him in his own eyes, than stooping to one who looks up to him for such distinction." At all events, he attached himself to Miss Carpenter; and, assisted by the facilities which the manners of a watering place afford to those engaged in an *affaire du cœur*, "told her his tale, and was a thriving wooer." After a protracted correspondence with Lord Downshire, the marriage was agreed upon, and the young couple were united at Carlisle, on the 24th of December, 1797. It was probably about this time that, out of compliment to his lady, he transferred his allegiance from the Presbyterian Kirk, in the bosom of which he had been educated, to the Episcopal Church. It is not for man to presume to read the heart; but, as far as we can judge from word and deed, religion was with Scott more a sentiment than a vital and influential principle. The same vague reverential feeling which animated his childhood continued to sanctify his maturer feelings, although overborne, from time to time, by the strong full pulse of busy manhood. But religion was not with him as with a few happily constituted natures, the animating motive and regulating principle of all his actions.

Above any other people on the face of the earth, the middle classes in Great Britain are averse to intermarriages with foreigners. Miss Carpenter's French blood would of itself have been enough to annoy the Scotts; but the rumours regarding her paternity excited their vehement indignation. The young lady was accompanied by a Miss Nicholson, who was reported to be her mother, to whom she certainly paid much deference, although there was not the most distant resemblance in their faces and figures. Aunt Jenny, and all the spinsters of

the line and lineage of Scott, called a council of war, to deliberate whether they could in decency visit the young couple whilst this suspicious person remained with them. The debate was summed up by a lady, to whom we have more than once had occasion to refer, who, with equal good sense and determination, declared, that "so long as she behaved herself properly, it was nothing to them who the devil she was." Scott's father and mother made their complaints ring in all quarters, asking the very servants who young Mrs. Scott was, to give greater notoriety to their discontent.

All this *niaiserie* passed unseen, at least unnoticed by Walter. He led his bride home to a house which he had prepared for her in the second flat of No. 108, George's Street, and quickly set himself to the enjoyment of domestic quiet, sweetened by literary pursuits, and varied by the active calls of his profession and volunteer engagements. That this rational unromantic scheme of household comfort was all he contemplated, is strikingly shown by two of his speeches to friends about this time. To an old and attached domestic, who reproached him with having contracted a marriage which caused vexation to his parents, he answered in a half apologetic manner, "that it would keep him at home at nights." To a witty friend, who took the liberty of rallying him on his selection of a wife, he said, "she would bring him bairns, and not interfere with his work, and that was all he cared for." He lived long enough to know that kindly and amiable dispositions, unless engrafted upon strict principle and a strong mind, were no sufficient guarantee for happiness in the married state. But at this time, no such forebodings haunted him. He had health, a young, pretty and amiable wife, and a competent income, with the prospect of speedy promotion. He spent the winter in Edinburgh, mixing with the *élite* of its society, and the summer vacation in a cottage beautifully situated in the valley of the Esk, a little way above Lasswade. He remained with his lady in the town and country houses which they first occupied, during the years 1798-99.

He continued to fill the office of Curator of the Advocates' Library, for both of these years. In the course of the first, a discussion occurred, and was renewed at different times, respecting one of the MS. volumes preserved in that collection, which, as it in all probability directed Scott's attention to a record of one of our Scottish Church Courts, ought not to be passed over in silence. What the nature of these discussions were, will best appear from the *memoranda* respecting them preserved in the minute-book of the Faculty.

"Edinburgh, 19th May, 1798.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Mr. Graham Dalryell laid before the Faculty an application made

by the Presbytery of Aberdeen, to the Curators of the Library, to return them the Presbytery book of Aberdeen, now in the Library. Mr. Macleod Bannatyne moved that the Faculty should remit to the Curators as a committee, instructions to examine the nature of the manuscript, and report at the next meeting of the Faculty; and in the mean time, they shall inform the Presbytery that the Faculty have taken their request into consideration."

\* \* \* \* \*

*"Edinburgh, 2d June, 1798.*

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"The Curators, according to the instructions of the Faculty, having examined the Presbytery book of Aberdeen, are of opinion that the writing has been executed about the end of the 16th century, and the beginning of the 17th century. It comprehends a period of twelve years, from 1598 to 1610; and nearly the whole seems to be written in the same hand. None of the resolutions or minutes of the Presbytery are signed by the moderator. The Curators are uncertain what was the custom respecting this. The greater part of the manuscript consists in censures for adultery and fornication; the rest chiefly ordinances for the visitation of kirks and mansees."

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*"Edinburgh, 9th July, 1798.*

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"The Faculty again took under consideration the application of the Presbytery of Aberdeen, and were of opinion that this application ought not to be complied with; but that the Curators might permit the Presbytery to take a copy of the manuscript at their own expense."

Another subject which occupied the attention of the Curators during the years 1798-99, was the provision of accommodation for their rapidly accumulating collection of books, and the farther processes of classifying and cataloguing thereby rendered necessary.

*"Edinburgh, 30th June, 1798.*

"Mr. Graham Dalryell, one of the Curators of the library, represented the necessity of providing farther room for containing the books that were rapidly increasing in the library, and suggested the propriety of fitting up a gallery in the Regal-rooms for that purpose."

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A plan and estimate of expense were submitted along with this re-

commendation; both of which were approved of by the Faculty. The ulterior measures alluded to above were not attempted till next year.

*“Edinburgh, 2d March, 1799.*

“A report was submitted from the Curators of the library to the following effect:—1st. That a new catalogue should be printed. 2d. That seeing books and manuscripts have been lost, from the unlimited number of books members were entitled to borrow, and retain for an unlimited time, a call of books ought to be made, and new regulations adopted. 3d. That the session papers be not lent out.”

These suggestions were carried into effect during the following year; but Scott's limited service, as curator, having by that time expired, he does not seem to have taken any part in the transaction. Thus much as to his share in the private business of the association to which he belonged: his appearance in the court of justiciary, during the two years, the events of which we are now reviewing, are limited to one occasion. This trial also was occasioned by the array of raw and undisciplined soldiery which now garrisoned the island, and throws additional light upon the character of those troops.

We have already met at Tranent with the Pembrokehire Fencible Cavalry: it is to them that our tale relates. They consisted, in a great measure, of young and fiery Welshmen, new to the military profession, and not very amenable to its strict line of duty. On the evening of the 9th of March, 1799, Serjeant Owen Jenkins, and one or two other non-commissioned officers of the same regiment, among whom was Poloty, the serjeant-major, were drinking in the house of a Mrs. Dawson. The conversation turned upon their respective companions, and the soldier-like appearance of their men. At last they fell into a hot dispute as to who was the tallest man in the regiment. One named one person, another another, till a voice from a neighbouring apartment contradicted them all, averring that a person not previously mentioned was the tallest man. The voice was recognised to be that of Butler, a private in the regiment, whose turn it was that evening to mount guard, and who had evidently transgressed the limits of duty in straying so far from the precincts of the guard-house. The rest of the serjeants insisted that Jenkins, to whose troop Butler belonged, should seize the delinquent; and on his asking time to drink off his liquor, taunted him with inability to preserve discipline among the men intrusted to his command. Already excited by liquor, and smarting under the jeers of his companions, Jenkins, a strong, active young man, laid hold of Butler, to convey him to the guard-house, and dragged him rather roughly from the tavern. No one followed them, but an inhabitant of the town, attracted by the noise

in the street below his window, looked out. The night was dark, but by the dim light of a lamp, and immediately beneath it, he saw two persons struggling, one of whom seemed to be beating the other with the flat of his sword. The on-looker overheard the beaten person say in a frank and conciliatory tone:—"Well, sergeant! give me thy hand and I'll go along with thee: only let me stop to gather up my plume of feathers." The sergeant, however, continued his blows, and the prisoner grappled with him. Amid the struggle they were lost in darkness, and a few moments later Jenkins burst into Dawson's tavern streaming with blood. It afterwards appeared that he had received no less than four deep stabs with a bayonet in his side and breast, inflicted by Butler, who followed him, and allowed himself to be secured without resistance.

The trial of the homicide took place on the 27th of May, before the high court of judiciary, when Mr. Walter Scott, whose success in the case of the Tranent rioters had raised his name in the district, appeared as counsel. He does not appear to have made much previous investigation, for no precognition was at any time instituted in behalf of the accused, with a view to detect discrepancies of statement or alleviating circumstances. Twelve witnesses were examined on the part of the prosecution, among whom was the gentleman who had witnessed the affray under the lamp. The nature of his evidence was strongly dwelt upon by Scott in his address on behalf of the prisoner; and although proved sufficient to procure for him the mitigated verdict of "culpable homicide," the deadly intent with which the blows were evidently given, however, and the violation of discipline implied in the whole transaction, drew down upon Butler a sentence more severe than is usually awarded to the culpable homicide, transportation for fourteen years.

Scott's first reward for his devotion to the party in power was allotted to him at the close of 1799. His appointment to the sheriffdom of Selkirkshire bears date the 16th of December in that year. It was then the uniform practice to bestow these semi-sinecures for political services alone, without the slightest regard to the talents or legal accomplishments of the person promoted; and although it does not appear that either at the time of his nomination or subsequently Scott possessed a deep or accurate knowledge of the law, it were to be wished that all appointments to the office of sheriff-depute had been equally unobjectionable. He possessed at any rate energy and sagacity. His circumstances might now be regarded as moderately opulent; for in addition to his salary as sheriff, and the annuity of Mrs. Scott, he had lately received an accession to his capital by the death of his father. The whole family were amply provided for; his brother Thomas, who had been bred to his father's profession, succeeded to his business, and thus fortune might well be said



to smile upon him, not only in his own person, but in that of each of his nearest and dearest relations.

His style of living was adapted to his income, neither mean nor ostentatious. He was fond of seeing his friends about him, especially in a quiet way on a Sunday evening. This dereliction from that stern judicial celebration of the day in his father's house annoyed his mother, who resided a short time with him after the death of her husband; but afterwards occupied a house of her own, chiefly on account of the irreconcilable nature of their views on this head. His country residence, we are told, was plainly but comfortably furnished. A lady nearly related to him, visiting one day at Lasswade a few months after his marriage, found him appareled in a linen jacket and apron, with a long brush in his hand, busily engaged in painting his drawing-room. On finding himself surprised in this dishabille, he laughingly threw aside his accoutrements, and insisted that as a penalty for taking him at unawares they should remain his prisoners during the day. They consented to stay dinner, and he gave the freest scope to his playful humour during the whole evening.

Mr. (now Sir John) Stoddart, who, during his tour in Scotland, visited the cottage at Lasswade, has paid an eloquent tribute to the pleasant days he spent there. Speaking of the vicinity, he says,—“The circumstance which peculiarly endears this spot to me, is the residence of my friend, Mr. Walter Scott, whose poetical talents are too well known to receive any accession of praise from me. I shall have a future occasion to speak of the pleasure and instruction which I derived from the society of such a companion in a subsequent part of my tour; yet I cannot withhold the immediate expression of my feelings; they oblige me to say something, and the fear of doing them injustice prevents me from saying much. Though we cannot pay the debts of friendship in public, we should not be ashamed to acknowledge them: this false shame of our best feelings has indeed become almost fashionable, but is a fashion ominous to general morals, and destructive of individual happiness. I cannot believe but that a reader of taste would be delighted with even a slight copy of that domestic picture, which I contemplated with so much pleasure during my short visit to my friend,—a man of native kindness and cultivated talent, passing the intervals of a learned profession amidst scenes highly favourable to his poetic inspirations, not in a churlish and rustic solitude, but in the daily exercise of the most precious sympathies, as a husband, a father, and a friend. To such an inhabitant, the simple unostentatious elegance of the cottage of Lasswade is well suited, and its image will never recur to my memory without a throng of those pleasing associations whose outline I have faintly sketched.”

The circle in which Scott moved now included all that was distinguished for rank or literature in his native city. The rising poet, the ornament of his party, whose poems were read by Matthew Lewis to the literary coteries of England's exclusives, and who was patronised and introduced into society under the auspices of the Dukes of Buccleuch and Roxburghe, was a person whose acquaintance was eagerly sought after. Under the roofs of the Duchess of Gordon and Lady Charlotte Campbell, he had occasion to meet the most distinguished strangers who visited Edinburgh. Among others, it is deserving of particular notice, that he was repeatedly in company with Mrs. Siddons during her professional visits. At the house of a lady, who still survives to tell the story, he was one evening called upon to give a specimen of his talents for improvisatore story-telling. The audience consisted, among others, of the great tragedian, and Henry Erskine. It is with regret we add, that the only account our informant can give us of the tale is, that "it was about Coimbra, and shockingly tiresome." In these gay scenes our hero mingled with more safety than poor Burns, for his rank and prospects in his profession gave him in some sort a claim to admission on a footing of equality. It was not in his case a repetition of the fable of the vessel of clay which had strayed into the society of the vessels of brass. He was not poor, and to be "thrown regardless by," when the curiosity or silly patronising mood of his titled *friends* was sufficiently gratified. His character of poet only served to enhance his claims to attention, to expose him to the blandishments of beauty and fashion. We find more than one of his minor poems composed at this period, "at the request" of ladies of rank. Even the Lay of the Last Minstrel was occasioned by such a petition.

His most intimate associate at this time seems to have been William Erskine, afterwards Lord Kinneder, to whom he repeatedly and in strong terms expressed his gratitude for literary advice. To judge by the very few specimens of Erskine's powers which have met the public view, he must have possessed a polished mind and correct taste, without one spark of genius. Or, to express ourselves more strongly, he must have been one of those common-place and superficial thinkers, who, on the ground of their never going far wrong, take it upon them to control and direct the energies of judgment. Habitual deference, and esteem based on the qualities of the heart, have more or less blended every man of genius to the presumption of some such monitor of this kind. In the dedication to Erskine, prefixed to one of the cantos of *Marmion*, Scott enumerates the topics which his friend was in the habit of recommending to his muse. It is evident that Erskine's ideas of the finest subjects of poetry were limited to the theme of a birth-day ode,

dressed up in stately heroic lines, remarkable only for the monotonous "return of still expected rhymes."

A kindred taste for the antiquities of their native country formed a bond of union between Scott and the late Lord Woodhouselee. The same affinity of sentiments drew him into relations of intimacy with Mr. Heber, who established his residence in Edinburgh during the winter of 1799-1800. This gentleman, remarkable for the urbanity and kindness of his disposition, was one of those who "would willingly sit up night after night to collate various editions, and note various readings." He was a prowler about book-stalls, a zealous collector of forgotten volumes. In addition to his accomplishments as a classical scholar, Mr. Heber was intimately versant in the older literature of England. He had pushed his researches beyond the ballad literature, upon which cold scent the disciples of the bishop of Dromore still kept puzzling, into the deeper and more fertile fields of the Elizabethan drama; a province, the labourers in which, hitherto little better than word-hunters, had a more genial spirit breathed into them, about this time, or not long afterwards, by the fine-thoughted effusions of Charles Lamb. Under the auspices of Heber, Scott extended his acquaintance with Shakspeare to the writings of his scarcely less gigantic contemporaries, and received from the well-stored mind of his new friend, a rich addition to his store of curious and *out-of-the-way* knowledge.

It was to Heber that Scott owed his first introduction to John Leyden; and in adverting to the commencement of the friendship contracted by the refined virtuoso for that bluff specimen of Scottish learning, we find for the first time an opportunity of introducing a name since long and intimately connected with literature. Archibald Constable had, not long before the period of which we now speak, begun business as a bookseller, in a narrow dingy shop in the High street. The most profitable branch of his trade was the sale of Heinneccius' Pandects to the law students. But possessing a taste for curious and ancient books, he was gradually amassing a rich store of those baits for the bibliomaniac. As a law-stationer it was that he formed his acquaintance with the future conductors of the Edinburgh Review; as an antiquarian bookseller, he connected himself with a very different class of literati; and on the strength of these connections, prompted by a bold and speculative inclination, he commenced that career which has linked his name indissolubly with the history of the literature of our age, and will give us occasion to introduce him to the reader's notice once and again during the continuation of our narrative. A bookseller's shop, like misery, "brings a man acquainted with strange bedfellows," and on this occasion it brought about an intimacy between two men of the most dissimilar tempers. Heber, we are told by Scott, "was a frequenter, of

course, of Mr. Constable's shop, where he made many valuable acquisitions at a rate very different from the exactions of the present day. In these researches he formed an acquaintance with Leyden, who examined, as an amateur, the shelves which Mr. Heber ransacked as a purchaser."

Leyden was one of the most peculiar characters in a circle of young men devoted to literary pursuits, who enjoyed the patronage of Dr. Robert Anderson, the first man of letters who published a complete edition of the English poets. They were visited by occasional glances of countenance from the Earl of Buchan, but his supercilious and parsimonious notice was nothing to the warm friendship of the worthy doctor. He edited, for some time, a publication called "The Bee," and subsequently, to the close of its career, the *Edinburgh Magazine*. There was always a seat vacant at his fireside for young men of promise, be their original rank in life what it may; and not unfrequently a nook in his *Magazine* for their effusions. Hence his house became the rendezvous of all those youths of talent and genius, many of them fated to bear a distinguishing name afterwards in the literary annals of their country, who, sprung from the very humblest classes of society, laboured hard and fared sparsely to satiate that intense desire for advancement in fame and fortune, which, we are proud to reflect, has ever been a distinguished characteristic of our native peasantry. Amongst these, it is true, mingled some whose worldly prospects seemed budding more promisingly, but still not so glowing as to prove a passport into those exclusive circles where fashion, fortune, or high birth, is reckoned indispensable to entitle the individual to the rites and courtesies of hospitality. Around this man of genuine benevolence, if not of lofty genius, were gathered at this time a band of young men, destined to fight their way to notoriety, by their own unaided exertions, and despite all the frowns of fortune.

Dr. Thomas Brown, the amiable and ingenuous philosopher, was one of this "enlightened few." The surpassing qualities of this eminent man, equally as a scholar, a metaphysician, and a Christian, are yet too fresh in the memory of the present generation to need any retrospective notice here. His power of mental analysis was remarkably subtle: but the style of his rhetoric was perhaps too inflated and ambitiously ornamented, for an effective instructor of youth. He seems to have laboured even painfully hard to attain the distinction of a poet, and published a volume of fugitive pieces, the longest of which, the "*WAR FRIEND*," was, else we mistake much, an ambitious attempt at emulating the translations and imitations of the German ballads, with the admiration of which the whole literary world around him was then filled. These juvenile effusions may now be considered, to use the favourite expression

of Jonathan Oldbuck, as scarcely "*in rerum natura*;" and, however creditable to him as proofs of a youthful and praiseworthy enthusiasm, we notice them here merely as affording a remarkable instance of highly polished versification, and beautiful, nay, sometimes impassioned sentiment, with scarcely one poetical idea throughout. As the Ettrick Shepherd is somewhere represented as saying, (certainly with as much coarseness as truth,) in passing judgment upon some modern English songs, "they're clear and cauld, like the drap at a man's nose on a frosty morning."

Murray, the philologist, whose father taught him to read by drawing the letters with a burned stick on the back of a wool-card, and who, even while tending his sheep in the wilds of Galloway, made himself master of seven languages, was another of the youthful *coterie* at Dr. Anderson's hospitable fireside; and, without naming more, may also be mentioned the author of the *Pleasures of Hope*.

John Leyden was a man of warm heart, deep susceptibility, and daring courage, and of extensive rather than accurate or practically useful acquirements. His writings are full of curious knowledge and irregular bursts of genius. His uniform struggle to be and appear a greater man than nature designed him, was so marked, as, in the eyes of those who knew him not intimately, to savour somewhat of pretension. His affectation, too, of preserving the rustic language and manners of the class from which he sprung, despite the refined and classical nature of his studies, and the polished circles in which he was an early and welcome guest, sat any thing but gracefully on him. To those who had opportunities of studying his character more narrowly, however, these venial defects were more, much more than compensated by his devoted affection for those he loved; the unwearied enthusiasm with which he followed out any favourite pursuit, or struggled to serve a friend. A congenial taste for ballads, romance, and border antiquities, immediately attached him to Scott, to whom he was introduced by Heber, and the progress of mutual acquaintance only riveted more strongly the ties of friendship. A characteristic anecdote of Leyden was afterwards told by Scott, which, although more *apropos* to a subsequent part of our narrative, may here be given as the finishing stroke to our necessarily brief and imperfect portraiture of this amiable and excellent man:—"In this labour (procuring materials for the '*Ministralsy of the Scottish Border*,' which we will forthwith have occasion to notice,) Leyden was equally interested by friendship for the editor, and by his own patriotic zeal for the honour of the Scottish borders; and both may be judged of from the following circumstance. An interesting fragment of an ancient historical ballad had been obtained, but the remainder, to the great disturbance of the editor and his coadjutor, (Leyden,) was not

to be recovered. Two days afterwards, while the editor was sitting with some company after dinner, a sound was heard at a distance like that of the whistling of a tempest through the torn rigging of the vessel which scuds before it. The sounds increased as they approached more near, and Leyden (to the great astonishment of such of the guests as did not know him,) burst into the room, chanting the desiderated ballad with the most enthusiastic gesture, and all the energy of the saw-tones of his voice. It turned out that he had walked between forty and fifty miles and back again for the sole purpose of visiting an old person who possessed this precious remnant of antiquity."

We are now approaching that period at which Scott may be said to have laid the foundation of his future fame, and that too, strangely enough, by the publication of a work scarcely entitled to the claim of originality. We allude to his "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." Before entering into the detail, however, of a career so brilliant as his was destined to be, the plan of our work compels us to advert to one or two minor circumstances.

Although Scott, at this period, (1800,) was gradually, and perhaps to himself, as to others, imperceptibly, gliding into that current of intellectual occupation for which Providence seems so palpably to have destined him, he had by no means relinquished the duties, immediate or prospective, of his profession. It is, perhaps, proper to state, for the information of those unacquainted with our Scottish institutions, that the commission of sheriff, or steward of a county, does not, as the law now stands, (though it is believed it will not do so long,) render the local residence of that functionary at all necessary; his duties being discharged either by a substitute, or, when requisite, by personal correspondence with himself. These gentlemen, therefore, being invariably selected from the ranks of the legal profession, are generally to be found pursuing their original practice as pleaders before the court of session, during its sittings, as assiduously as if no such office had been entrusted to their charge. Accordingly, we find the subject of our memoir, the year after his appointment as sheriff of Selkirkshire, engaged as counsel for a man of the name of Elliot, a horse-dealer in Hawick, who was tried before the high court of judiciary for the crime of forgery. We notice this trial not only as being in itself somewhat anomalous in our Scottish criminal annals, but as being apparently the last of the same description in which Scott was engaged, and in which, as the junior and *working* counsel, he acquitted not only his client, but himself, triumphantly. The trial lasted two days; between twenty and thirty witnesses were examined, and the jury returned a verdict of guilty of *knowingly uttering* base notes,—held equivalent, by the law, to the primary crime of *forging*,—and, therefore, subjecting the accused to the capital punishment (now

happily abolished) of death. From certain circumstances, elicited by the counsel for the pannel during the procedure, the lords of justiciary reckoned themselves warranted in suspending consideration of the verdict, and ultimately ordered mutual informations to be lodged by the counsel for the crown and the criminal. The paper in behalf of the latter is in Scott's name, and is a very elaborate production. It shows an extensive knowledge both of the practice and spirit of our Scottish criminal jurisprudence, as well as great art in representing the pannel as beyond the pale of its application. The concluding paragraph of the pleading is more characteristic of the author of *Waverley* than the young Scottish advocate:—"He (the pannel) has indeed much to answer for, and has, perhaps, too well merited the punishment which he deprecates. But a dead fly will corrupt a box of precious ointment, and the irregular punishment of the most obscure and guilty individual, may pervert the noblest system of jurisprudence."

The result to the pannel was an unconditional dismissal from the bar. It may perhaps not be uninteresting to state, that the senior counsel for the accused was John Clerk, afterwards Lord Eldon.

Although, as we have already said, his duties as sheriff of Selkirkshire did not render his permanent residence in the country imperative, it was nevertheless necessary for him to reside in the district a certain portion of the year. He therefore forthwith removed from his cottage at Lasswade, and took the house of Ashiesteel, on the banks of the Tweed, which we have before described, and which continued to be his country residence till he took up his abode at Abbotsford. The appointment was to him, in every respect, an agreeable and beneficial one. Besides adding £300 a-year to his income, (his means being little augmented by his professional practice,) and conferring an enviable general and local respectability to his character, he was thus transplanted to a district abounding with valued relatives and friends, and with scenery, which, dear as it was to him while a boy, was now incalculably more precious to him as a poet. It would appear to be on his removal to the banks of his favourite stream, that Scott abandoned equally all prospect and desire of obtaining distinction at the bar, and gave the *laissez aller* to the natural impulses of his heart, and the soaring pinions of his imagination. His office as sheriff-depute was (exclusive, of course, of the salary) little more than a nominal one, and he was by no means inclined to augment its duties. Indeed, it is averred by Hogg, that if he ever displayed any thing like partiality in the exercise of his functions, it was towards the poachers by land and water, who were occasionally brought before him—a species of legal game which his brethren of the bench seem, from time immemorial, to have reckoned it one of the prime purposes of their office to nose out and

hunt down. Scott entertained, however, a high notion of the importance and dignity of his office, and resolutely vindicated it when occasion required. It is said that, on one occasion, when the Archduke Nicholas, now Emperor of Russia, was passing through Selkirk, the populace, in their natural anxiety to behold such a curiosity as a live prince, pressed round him so closely, that Scott found it impossible to get near him. The magistrate's patience at length failed, and shouting out, in an authoritative tone,—“Room for your sheriff! Room for your sheriff!” he pushed and elbowed the gazers impatiently aside, until he reached the prince, to whom he apologised for his countrymen's rudeness.

Ere we proceed to the retrospect of Scott's career as a poet, we will follow out our original plan of introducing brief sketches of his early friends and acquaintances, with as much chronological consecutiveness as possible. Amongst these, one of the first entitled to notice, in priority of time as well as genius, is Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd.

James Hogg was Scott's junior only by a few months, having been born in March, 1772. His progenitors, as he tells us himself, were all shepherds in the border districts,—a class of men to whom, for natural intelligence, moral integrity, fervent piety, and stern independence of mind, we can find no parallel in the annals of mankind. The character of this primitive, and, generally speaking, still unsophisticated class of men, is little known or appreciated, even by their own countrymen. Mingling little with their fellow-men beyond the bounds of their own secluded vales, and then only at distant intervals, their knowledge of mankind is astonishing, and would be reckoned intuitive, did we not know how powerfully the “silence of the mountain solitudes,” by engendering habits of self-reflection, and throwing the heart back upon itself, leads to an intimacy with the secret springs which regulate and influence human conduct. The nature of their occupation, too, tends to inspire them with a feeling of trust and reliance on Providence; imbues them with an habitual devoutness of thought, while it elevates their deportment with a natural dignity, almost patriarchal.

This is any thing but an exaggerated picture of the border shepherds, as all who have had the opportunity, and the courage, to penetrate into their native fastnesses, and have contented themselves with frugal and healthful fare for the sake of studying original individuality of character, can attest. They are in fact, in the widest meaning of the expression, truly what Allan Cunningham has so emphatically denominated them, “Nature's gentlemen.” But it must not be imagined, from what we have here said, that these men are ignorant of the events and transactions of the busy world around them. The very reverse is the fact; and this more especially since the commencement of that system of



cheap publishing which forms one of the most distinctive features of the present age. And we here call to recollection an incident illustrative of our present observations which it may not be uninteresting in this place to record. The writer of these pages happened, a few years ago, to be on a pilgrimage to the classic banks of the Yarrow, with two friends. The Shepherd's house was, as usual, crowded to the door with a miscellaneous assemblage from all points of the compass, resembling strongly, indeed, what he himself jocularly termed it, "a bees' skaeap in the process of *casting*." With a view, therefore, to relieve him somewhat from the oppressive duties of hospitality, we walked up the glen to St. Mary's Loch, in order to wile away the forenoon. Here we *foregathered* with a shepherd, to whom one of my friends, a native of the district, was known; and who, after exchanging civilities, instead of commencing a running commentary on the state of the weather and markets, as we expected, proceeded, to our great astonishment, to criticise Scott's *Napoleon*, then newly published, and which none of us, to our inexpressible confusion, had yet seen. Our pastoral friend, however, seemed to have analysed it completely, and stated several objections, as respected historical accuracy, most of which we afterwards found gravely put forth in the critical press of the day.

Making every allowance, however, for the benefit of intelligent parentage, it must be owned that Hogg's career is one of the most extraordinary examples on record of natural genius, forcing its way upwards through all obstacles into a lofty and enviable fame. Like the children of almost every Scottish peasant, since the establishment of our invaluable parochial system of education, Hogg was early instructed in writing and reading; but at seven years of age, in consequence of domestic misfortunes, was taken from school and sent to service in the dignified capacity of a cow-herd. "In all," he says, "I had spent about half a year at school; and was never another day at any school whatever." He was soon transferred from the charge of cows to that of sheep, in which employment he continued unremittingly till his eighteenth year, without attempting to lift a pen, and scarcely seeing a book,—the Bible excepted. It was not until he was twenty-one, that he attempted to write verses, and his first rude efforts were, as he, as candidly as justly, says, "sad trash;" but this seems to have arisen chiefly from his attempting flights far beyond the still narrow range of his powers. Scarcely had he begun to scribble, when the casual perusal of Ramsay's unrivaled pastoral fired him with a dramatic frenzy, and he began to sacrifice alternately to Thalia and Melpomene, with an ardour of devotion, by which, if he attained some notoriety, it was of a kind which his future fame may, without much loss, dispense with. Under the discriminating eye and fostering encouragement of his master, Mr. Wil-

liam Laidlaw, at Elibank, the shepherd continued to write, and to improve as he wrote; and his effusions began gradually to creep into public notice. Perhaps the startling and reproachful precedent of Burns, then recently laid in his grave, rendered his countrymen the more ready to open their convictions to the claims of his still more rustic and unpolished successor. In 1802, the first two volumes of the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" were published, and it must have been in the autumn of that year, that the first interview between Scott and Hogg, as detailed in the Shepherd's own graphic words, took place, although the latter himself, it will be seen, dates it in 1801. The mistake is, however, palpable, even by his own narrative. "One fine day in the summer of 1801, as I was busily engaged working in the field of Ettrick House, (a farm lately given up in lease to him by his brother William,) Wat Shiel came over to me and said, that 'I boud gang down to the Ramsay-cleuch as fast as my feet could carry me, for there war some gentlemen there wha wantit to speak to me.'—'Wha can it be at the Ramsay-cleuch that wants me, Wat?'—'I couldna say, for it was na me they spak to in the byganging, but I'm thinking its the *Shirra*\* and some of his gang.'—I was rejoiced to hear this, for I had seen the first volumes of the Minstrelsy of the Border, and had copied a number of old things from my mother's recital, and sent them to the editor preparatory for a third volume. [Our readers will here observe, in reference to the date of this interview, that the third volume was published in 1803.] I accordingly went towards home to put on my Sunday clothes, but before reaching it, I met with the Shirra and Mr. William Laidlaw, [Hogg's late master] coming to visit me. They alighted and remained in our cottage for a space better than an hour, and my mother chanted the ballad of Old Maitland to them, with which Mr. Scott was highly delighted. I had sent him a copy, but I thought Mr. Scott had some dread of a part being forged, which had been the cause of his journey into Ettrick. When he heard my mother sing it he was quite satisfied, and I remember he asked her if she thought it had ever been printed, and her answer was,—'Oo, na, na, sir, it was never prented i' the world, for my brothers an' me learned it frae auld Andrew Moor, an' he learned it, an' mony mae, frae ane auld Baby Maitlan', that was housekeeper to the first laird o' Tushilaw.'—'Then that must be a very auld story, indeed, Margaret,' said he.—'Aye, it is that! But mair nor that, except George Watson and James Stewart, there was never ane o' my sangs prentit, till ye prentit them yersell, an' ye hae spoilt them a' thegither! *They war made for singing, an' no for reading; an' they're neither right spelled nor right setten down!*' 'Heh—heh—heh!

\* Sheriff—Mr. Scott being then Sheriff of Selkirkshire.

Take ye that, Mr. Scott,' said Laidlaw. Mr. Scott answered by a hearty laugh, and the recital of a verse, but I have forgot what it was, and my mother gave him a rap on the knee with her open hand, and said,—'it was true enough for a' that.' " Such is a part of Hogg's account of this interesting introduction to his illustrious friend and brother poet. The intercourse, however, lasted two days, and laid the foundation of a friendship which only terminated with the death of one of them. They visited together several places in the district renowned in the ballad and legendary lore in which they were both such enthusiasts; and it may be worth while noting a few of the Shepherd's reminiscences of his friend's appearance and bearing at that period. "I remember," says he, "his riding upon a terribly high-spirited horse, which had the perilous fancy of leaping every drain, rivulet, and ditch, that came in our way. The consequence was, that he was everlastingly bogging himself, while sometimes his rider kept his seat in despite of his plunging, and at other times he was obliged to extricate himself the best way he could. We visited the old castles of Thirlestane and Tushilaw, and dined and spent the afternoon and the night with Mr. Brydon of Crosslie. Sir Walter was, all the while, in the highest good humour, and seemed to enjoy the range of mountain solitude which we traversed, exceedingly. Indeed, I never saw him otherwise. In the fields, on the rugged mountains, or even toiling in Tweed to the waist, I have seen his glee not only surpass himself, but that of all other men. I remember of leaving Altrive with him once, accompanied by Mr. Laidlaw and Sir Adam Ferguson, to visit the tremendous solitudes of the Grey Mare's Tail and Loch Skene.\* I conducted them through that wild region by a path which, if not rode by Clavers, was, I dare say, never before rode by any gentleman. Sir Adam rode inadvertently into a gulf, and got a sad fright; but Sir Walter, in the very worst paths, never dismounted, save at Loch Skene to take some dinner. Our very perils were to him matter of infinite merit; and then there was a short-tempered boot-boy at the inn (at Moffat) who wanted to pick a quarrel with him, at which he laughed till the water ran over his cheeks." These reminiscences of the Shepherd are valuable and interesting, as displaying at once the animal temperament of his brother bard, and the habitual channel in which Scott's ideas ran, at that period of his life. And in the picture given, we think every one will perceive that the exuberant flow of both—his contempt of toil and danger, and the chivalric current of his feelings—are to be found bursting forth irrepressibly in every page of those immortal strains to which he soon afterwards gave birth.

\* A waterfall and lake amid the fearfully-wild mountain fastnesses that separate the vales of Yarrow and Moffat.

Hogg subsequently remarks, that the enthusiasm with which Scott recited and spoke of our ancient ballads during that interesting tour through the forest of Ettrick, first led him (Hogg) to attempt an imitation of them. Every one knows how successfully he did so, in his "Mountain Bard," published in 1807; which with equal propriety and gratitude he dedicated to the high priest of that altar whence he caught the fire of his inspiration. Scott, indeed, encouraged the publication of the work by word and deed, not only as an enthusiastic poet, but a warm—an actively warm—friend. Of his kind offices in the former character, Hogg has beautifully said—

"Blest be his generous heart for aye,  
He told me where the relic lay,  
Pointed my way with ready will,  
Afar on Ettrick's wildest hill;  
Watched my first notes with curious eye,  
And wondered at my minstrelsy:  
He little weened a parent's tongue  
Such strains had o'er my cradle sung."

When the work was finished, Scott took the bard with him to Edinburgh, and introduced him to Mr. Constable, who became the publisher, although on terms not the most flattering to the author. The truth was, we believe, that the bibliopole was at first somewhat staggered at the loutish bearing, uncouth dialect, and grotesque caligraphy of the untutored borderer.

It is at all times a delicate, and sometimes a dangerous matter to touch upon the private intercourse between friend and friend, when either or both are in the land of the living. But we have Hogg's own and oft repeated authority for stating, that, amid all his many vicissitudes of fortune, Scott ever continued to be his warm and consistent friend, in the fullest acceptation of the term. And this we are the more anxious to state, as the illustrious subject of our narrative has more than once been accused of a callousness and indifference in his friendships, even in those contracted during his earlier years, when the heart was young and the feelings ardent, amounting to apathetic insensibility. Never was charge more unjust, as we shall have little difficulty in showing. But we have not yet arrived at the proper place for making up an estimate either of his public or private character. One instance of his kindly and forgiving disposition, however, we cannot help here giving, in connection with the individual about whom we have just been speaking. Among other literary speculations which mingled with the teeming fancies of Hogg's brain during the heyday of his career at Edinburgh, he conceived the idea of publishing a volume containing a poem by each of the great masters of the lyre then living in Britain. Pro-

ceeding to act upon this notion, he forthwith applied personally or by letter to the parties concerned, little doubting of their cordial co-operation and assistance in a scheme so novel and striking. His applications were for the most part favourably received, and either ready contributions or promises of their speedy transmission were sent to him. Hogg became hourly more delighted with his scheme. He had already scaled

"The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar,"—

and now, he conceived, he had found the "open sesame" to the temple of fortune. To his utter discomfiture, however, his friend Scott, of whose support he reckoned himself most secure, at once unqualifiedly refused to lift his pen for such a purpose. Hogg remonstrated earnestly, but without effect; and finally demanded an explanation of his refusal. But on this point Scott was equally obstinate; nor would he even condescend to give any opinion respecting the propriety of Hogg's projected publication. Stung with indignation at treatment which he conceived to be undeservedly injurious and contemptuous, the Shepherd flung from him; sent him a most abusive letter, impugning equally his qualities as a man, and his capacity as a poet, and refused either to speak to or meet with him for more than a twelvemonth afterwards. Hogg, at the same time, threw aside his favourite project in angry vexation, conceiving, very justly, even amid his wrath, that the want of Scott's name would, in all likelihood, tend materially to frustrate its success. He soon afterwards revived it again, however, in a different fashion, and published his *Poetic Mirror*, giving imitations (many of them happily executed) of the most celebrated of our country's living poets. During the interval of estrangement between Scott and Hogg, the latter (who afterwards confessed the quarrel to be all on his own side) fell ill, and was soon considered in great danger of his life. Such a casualty is the surest touch-stone of earthly affection. Not knowing how he would be received personally by his afflicted friend, Scott made daily and most anxious enquiries after his welfare at the shop of Hogg's border countrymen and earliest benefactors, Messrs. Scott and Grieve, hatters, North Bridge; he desired that no pecuniary consideration might prevent his having the best medical advice in Edinburgh, and every thing which could contribute to the restoration of his health; and frequently observed, with much emotion—"I would not for all I am worth in the world that any thing serious should befall Hogg." As his friends had been enjoined to secrecy by Scott, it was long after his recovery ere the particulars of this affectionate solicitude for his welfare reached the ears of the Shepherd. When it did so, the consequence was, an immediate and cordial reconciliation. Scott's reasons for refusing to accede

to his friend's urgent request, as well as declining all explanation on the subject, seem to us perfectly plain, and reflect, in our opinion, the highest credit both on his head and heart. The project was, to say the least of it, a somewhat mercenary one; at least, had it been carried into effect, and redounded much to the editor's profit, there was a strong probability of its being viewed in that light by the world. Scott, therefore, discountenanced a proposal by which the friend he esteemed might sully the bright fame he had then acquired in the world of letters, and ultimately forfeit his own self-respect—the direst of human misfortunes; while the subject was, at the same time, of a nature which, to a man of delicacy, forbade either argument or remonstrance.

It would be out of our way, in these pages, to enter on a detailed review of Hogg's literary career; and the time is happily not yet arrived for making up the balance-sheet of his merits and defects, either as an intellectual or a social being. Thus much, however, we will venture to say,—that as a poet, he has given undoubted proofs that his genius is, or has been, of the highest order, however much he may have tampered with it in his “wayward moods.” Few, we think, will venture to predict the time when the name of the author of the “Queen's Wake” shall have passed into oblivion. As a man, few indeed are capable of appreciating him. But let those who may be inclined to speak lightly of him in either character, pause when they know that he is one whom Walter Scott esteemed in both.

We turn now to our task of noticing the first publication upon which Scott, so to speak, adventured forth upon the perilous ocean of authorship, little dreaming, doubtless, of the long and glorious voyage before him, or that he was to be lighted along in his triumphant career by “the sunshine of a world's smile,”—his sails filled to cracking with the applauding breath of nations. We have already seen in what manner he employed himself for some years previously, with the view of wresting the still surviving relics of our ancient minstrelsy from the ruthless grasp of oblivion,—traversing the barren heaths, and exploring the solitary dells, of the highlands of the south, with unwearying ardour and untiring foot. But we have learned, even since we commenced our task as biographers, that his mind had been directed to this object much earlier than any one, until very lately, was aware of. In the splendid edition of his poetical works, now in the course of publication by Mr. Cadell, we find a note by the editor, Mr. Lockhart, stating that “there is, in the library at Abbotsford, a collection of ballads, partly printed broadsides, partly in MS., in six small volumes, which, from the handwriting, must have been formed by Sir Walter Scott while attending the earlier classes of Edinburgh college.” If the editor be correct in his conjecture, Scott must have begun and completed this voluminous collection of

antiquarian lore previous to his *fourteenth* year; as we have shown from unquestionable documents that his career at the *earlier* classes of the college was cut short at the commencement of the session of 1784, by indisposition, when he was barely past thirteen; nor did he again renew his studies there until the winter of 1790. Now, as we have been able to get no trace of Scott's having applied himself to any undertaking of the description adverted to by Mr. Lockhart, or even of his having shown a decided preference for such pursuits, beyond the perusal of stories of romance and *diablerie*, antecedent to his long and severe attack of illness, (from which period, indeed, the poet himself dates his irrevocable lapse into the region of fiction,) we must conclude, either that we have been deficient in our sources of information, or that the learned editor has overlooked the abrupt termination of Scott's classical studies. With every sentiment of deference to an authority so high, we are inclined to think, that without some further proof to the contrary, the public will be disposed to continue its belief in the correctness of our narrative.

Besides his own indefatigable industry in collecting materials for his "Minstrelsy," Scott enjoyed many advantages in its compilation. Besides his intimate acquaintance with the many valuable collections of the same description already published—from the miscellany of Andro Myllar and Walter Chepman,\* of Edinburgh, in 1508, to the enlarged edition of David Herd's ample work, in 1791—he had the benefit of the best exertions of many friends well qualified to assist him. Access was, by their influence, obtained for him to private libraries, and carefully preserved MSS. hitherto unprofaned by strangers' touch, by which he was, in innumerable instances, enabled to supply deficiencies, elucidate dubious passages, and correct false or corrupted readings in the many ballads which he had previously noted down from recitation. He mentions, in particular, a collection of border songs, under the title of *Glenriddel's MS.*, compiled by the late Mr. Riddel of Glenriddel, of which he had the use while preparing his work, and which proved of incalculable service to him.

If any one should suppose that, in thus stating the numerous sources of information afforded to Scott in the prosecution of his work, we are detracting from the merit of his labours, we answer that such a construction is as foreign to our meaning as it is *ex facie* absurd. The work was not one of original composition, but merely of a collection; and the co-operation of his friends only tended to facilitate and render

\* This book, which was printed in black letter, in 1508, contains a considerable store of Scottish popular poetry, and is supposed to be the earliest surviving specimen of the Scottish press.

more perfect the accomplishment of an object intrinsically national. The duties, however, of selecting, comparing, arranging—in short of editing, the collection, were nowise lightened by this ready zeal in furnishing materials; on the contrary, they were rendered the more burdensome and responsible, just in proportion to the number and value (to use a statutory expression) of the contributors.

Respecting the manner in which Scott discharged his self-imposed task, it would be more than superfluous now to examine. It has been said, and truly, that the work contains materials for scores of metrical romances. And this arises, perhaps, not more from the innumerable, singular, romantic, and picturesque incidents, which form the groundwork and are interspersed through the superstructure of most of these ancient effusions, than from the circumstance of these the earliest votaries of the muse having, as Scott himself remarks, the first choice out of the stock of materials which are proper to the art. "Thus it happens," continues he, "that early poets almost uniformly display a bold, rude, original cast of genius and expression. They have walked at free-will, and with unconstrained steps along the wilds of Parnassus, while their followers move with constrained gesture and forced attitudes, in order to avoid placing their feet where their predecessors have stepped before them." It may be questioned, however, how far this general remark is just, as applying to the order of ballads contained in the *Minstrelsy*, consisting, as they almost exclusively do, of narratives of historical occurrences, or private adventure; and whether, moreover, it can be said to hold good in any case, so far as Scott himself is concerned. The very nature of the subjects recorded in these old relics almost necessarily precludes any approach to refinement of sentiment; while the rude habits and barbarous manners of the times were equally incompatible with elegance of expression. Many passages doubtless occur, especially in the ballads of romance, of the most touching pathos and exquisite expression of natural feeling; but, in the main, the principal value of these strains of the olden time consists in the curious pictures they display of the habits, sentiments, and condition of society in days gone by, and to a knowledge of which we have no other means of attaining. And in this view they are to be regarded rather as useful and instructive, than adding any thing to our stock of intellectual luxuries. Of this, Scott, zealous and enthusiastic as he was, both as an antiquary and a poet, seems to have been perfectly aware at the time of their publication, and judged it prudent to throw in a short *caveat* to that effect, in his Introduction, with the view of deprecating the feeling of disappointment with which he expected his work to be received by the more refined and classical palates of modern times.

The introduction to the "*Minstrelsy*" is one of the most extraordi-



nary specimens of antiquarian research and abstruse learning, combined with extensive historical knowledge, ever submitted to the public. It gives a condensed but satisfactory history of the Border districts of Scotland, from the earliest known period down to the era of the Reformation,—the character and condition of the inhabitants throughout the different ages,—their habits, their religion, their superstitions and their occupations. It shows how deeply and attentively Scott had studied the history of his native land, ere he ventured to lift his pen as an author; how readily his mind laid hold of and stored up every occurrence of interest, and every remarkable trait of character. And now that the wand of the magician is broken—though his enchantments remain—a re-perusal of this his earliest acknowledged essay, affords an explanation of much that was inexplicable during the period of this mysterious power, and especially that exuberant profusion of historical incident with which he enriched his fictitious narratives, and gave to his plots and characters all the semblance and the interest of reality.

The “Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border” is divided into three distinct classes of poems. I. HISTORICAL BALLADS. II. ROMANTIC. III. IMITATIONS OF THESE COMPOSITIONS BY MODERN AUTHORS. The first class are defined to be those that relate to events which are either known actually to have taken place, or which, making due allowance for the exaggerations of poetical tradition, may readily be conceived to have had some foundation in history. The Romantic comprehends such legends as are current upon the border relating to fictitious and imaginative adventure. Of these two classes, there were no fewer than forty-three old ballads which appeared for the first time in the “Minstrelsy,”\* if we may credit the testimony of Mr. Motherwell of Glasgow—himself a poet of no mean rank, and a successful gleaner in the same oft-gathered field.† This is certainly, all things considered, a prodigious number; and entitles Scott and his coadjutors to the everlasting gratitude of their country. For it must be held in mind, that the relics of antiquity thus happily preserved, were in a condition even more perishable than the plate-mail of the heroes whose deeds are recorded in them; while they were, at the same time, every day undergoing a metamorphosis no less destructive of their original appearance and character than the other suffers from the corroding rust that at once destroys its strength and its identity. But it is Scott himself whom we have mainly to thank for the perfect state in which we find them,—for freeing them from those mutations, corruptions, and spurious interpola-

\* We here include the additional volumes published with the reprint of the two first, in 1803.

† *Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern; with an Historical Introduction and Notes.* By William Motherwell. 4to. Glasgow, 1827.

tions, the natural consequences of oral transmission, which weakened or destroyed their native vigour and beauty; searching out, with a patience of investigation almost incredible, the true readings of original texts; unriddling the real meaning of the antiquated terms in which they were originally dictated; and thus presenting them to us in a form at once intelligible to modern readers, and at the same time with all the genuine marks of authenticity about them. "Fortunate it was," observes Mr. Motherwell, (and few, we think, will dissent from his opinion,) "for the heroic legendary song of Scotland that the work was undertaken, and still more fortunate that its execution devolved upon one so well qualified in every respect to do its subject the most ample justice. Long will it live a noble and interesting monument of his unwearied research, curious and minute learning, genius, and taste. It is truly a patriot's legacy to posterity; and as much as it may be now esteemed, it is only in times yet gathering in the bosom of futurity, when the interesting traditions, the chivalrous and romantic legends, the wild superstitions, the tragic songs of Scotland, have wholly failed from living memory, that this gift can be duly appreciated. It is then that these volumes will be conned with feelings akin to religious enthusiasm, that their strange and mystic lore will be treasured up in the heart as the precious record of days forever passed away—that their grand stern legends will be listened to with reverential awe, as if the voice of a remote ancestor from the depths of the tombs had woke the thrilling strains of martial antiquity."

The "Minstrelsy" was generally received, on its publication, with the applause it merited. It had been long and eagerly expected; for although Scott's name was at that time little known, and still less his capacity for the task, beyond the circle of his own literary acquaintances, these, together with the knowledge of the many individuals of authority in antiquarian matters, who had taken an interest in, and lent their assistance to, the undertaking during its progress, was sufficiently numerous and influential to excite anticipations in the public mind of no ordinary kind. The popularity of the work is, perhaps, best proven, by the fact that a second edition was called for in the course of the first year.\*

As already mentioned, the "Minstrelsy" made its first appearance in two volumes, and included only two classes of ballads,—the historical

\* South of the Tweed, it attracted comparatively little notice beyond the arena of criticism. "The curiosity of the English," observes Scott, in speaking of its cold reception amongst them, "was not much awakened by poems in the rude garb of antiquity, accompanied with notes, referring to the obscure feuds of barbarous clans, of whose very names civilized history was ignorant." The "Southron" and the "civilized world," came to take a deeper interest in these "barbarous clans" before the termination of Scott's career.

and romantic—both of the olden time. At the reprint in the following year was added the volume of “Imitations” of the ancient ballads, by himself and various literary friends. But before speaking of these, we must advert to a circumstance attending the publication of the first two volumes, which attracted no little attention at the time. This was their issuing from the press of the small provincial town of Kelso, and in a style of typography which far surpassed any thing that had ever before been executed in Scotland. The printer was Mr. James Ballantyne, of whom, as also of his two brothers, David and John, mention was made in an early part of our memoir, as being a school-companion of Scott, at Kelso. These circumstances, together with his subsequent eminence in his trade, would sufficiently entitle him to some notice in these pages. But the close intimacy which afterwards subsisted betwixt Scott and the two brothers James and John, during the greater part of their mutual lives, and the peculiar circumstances which arose out of that connection, render our being somewhat particular in our account of both no less expedient than proper.

Mr. Ballantyne’s father was a respectable draper in Kelso, and was, or at least considered himself, an individual of no little importance in his native burgh. Of his family we know nothing, excepting those members of it who were thrown into companionship at school with the subject of our narrative. David, the eldest, as already mentioned, went to sea, but returned in bad health, and died at an early age. No great cordiality, we are told, subsisted betwixt Scott and the three Ballantynes while at Kelso, chiefly on account of certain consequential airs which, as the sons of one of the principal merchants in the place, the brothers thought themselves entitled to assume towards their compeers. This is a well known characteristic of the mercantile families in all our little provincial Scottish burghs, more especially if the head of the house happen to exercise some civic function, and have a seat in the “Cooncil.” The paltrier the place, the more powerful this propensity to pretension. This moral weakness arises from two causes,—first, a want of knowledge of the world; and, secondly, a lively sense of that obsequious deference to wealth and office which has generally been held a prominent feature in the national character, and which the poor being ever ready to pay, the rich are, of course, ever ready to exact. Scott, as we have seen, remained only about a twelvemonth at Kelso, but the acquaintance so coldly begun, was renewed upon his occasional visits to that place afterwards, and ultimately ripened into a warm and steady friendship. James was at first designed for the law, and served his apprenticeship with a Mr. James Potts, writer in Kelso. He afterwards came to Edinburgh, and, as we are informed, entered as a solicitor, but having only got one job in the course of two years, and no payment for

that, he returned to his native town quite undetermined as to his future line of life. About that time the tory gentlemen of the county were on the eve of starting a newspaper in accordance with their own political notions, and Mr. Ballantyne's principles having a similar bias, he was offered the editorship. This was the first acquaintance he formed with the art of printing. After he had been some time established in his situation, his old school-friend, Scott, one day called upon him, and said,—"Man," (this seems to have been a habitual term of address with Scott, in familiar dialogue.) "Man, James, I've got a parcel of old border ballads that I wish you would print for me." "Me print!" said Mr. Ballantyne, "how could I print, who never learned the art; and, besides, have no types but what are necessary for the newspaper!" This last difficulty was, however, obviated by Sir Walter's urgency. It happened at that time, that an English type-founding house was pushing its wares through Scotland, and that these wares were of a kind much superior to what had ever before been seen north of the Tweed. Of these Mr. Ballantyne was induced to order a quantity, almost solely for the purpose of printing his friend's ballads. It happened also very fortunately, that Mr. Ballantyne's principal workman had been a long time in the establishment of the celebrated Bensley, and was therefore capable of using his materials to the best purpose. With these advantages, and the excellent natural taste of Mr. Ballantyne, which was one of his most prominent qualities, together with a remarkably fine thick wove paper, the "*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*" burst upon the astonished eyes of the Scottish public,—a paragon of typographical perfection. Indeed, it almost as far surpassed, in appearance, the publications then issuing from the Scottish press, as it might now be reckoned superior to those of New South Wales at the present day. As a natural consequence, the Kelso printer was soon in general request in the publishing world, and in the course of a year or two afterwards, chiefly, we believe through the instigation and assistance of Scott, he was induced to remove to Edinburgh, where he commenced his long and distinguished career as a general printer. Of this, however, more hereafter. Suffice it here to say, that Mr. Ballantyne contributed powerfully, by his example, to diffuse throughout the printing trade of Scotland a taste for correct and elegant workmanship, previously unknown; but which has since been carried to a pitch of excellence rivaling the typography of any other part of the globe. Mr. Ballantyne's brother, John, had, in the mean while, been brought up to his father's trade, but when his brother's reputation and business, as printer in Kelso, increased, he was taken into the printing-office as his clerk, or book-keeper, and subsequently accompanied him to Edinburgh, where he soon after opened shop as a bookseller.

In 1808, the *Minstrelsy* was republished with considerable emendations and additions, both in prose and verse; for the interest excited by its first appearance had drawn forth both comments and contributions from many quarters hitherto overlooked. An additional volume was also added, which to some, perhaps, may appear not the least valuable of the three, in as far as genuine *poetry* is to be considered. This volume consisted of "Imitations of the Ancient Ballad," by modern writers, the pieces being founded upon such traditions as may be supposed to have employed the harps of the minstrels in the olden times.

Among these were several pieces by Scott himself, including his "Glenfinlas," and the "Eve of St. John," which we have formerly noticed, and which were written for, and first appeared in Lewis's "Tales of Wonder." There is also a long ballad by Lewis himself, entitled "Sir Agilthorn," which seems to have been regarded by the critics of the period as an effusion of transcendent merit, but which, we suspect, will be looked upon at the present day as little else than a bombastic rhapsody of extravagant sentiment. But such was the rage of the day; and Lewis has but too much excuse, as far as the universal prevalence of the same species of moral delinquency in all ages and countries can prove so, for yoking his genius to the chariot-wheels of fashion. As imitations, strictly so speaking, of our ancient border minstrelsy, there is little room for disputing that Scott's own compositions in this supplementary volume are by far the best; but as a modern specimen of pure and simple ballad poetry, we would perhaps incline to give the palm to Leyden's "Mermaid." The plot or tradition on which that ballad is built, is literally worse than nothing, because hackneyed and threadbare long before Leyden's day; nor has he handled it to the best advantage; but the strain flows on in such a rich continuous stream of verbal melody, that the meagreness of the sense is completely absorbed in the harmony of the sound, and we cease from the perusal with a long respiration of intense delight, conjoined with an elevation of feeling such as is experienced in listening to the swelling tones of the organ, when pouring forth the strains of impassioned and unpremeditated devotion.

We can scarcely conceive any thing more finely apostrophic than the opening stanzas of this beautiful ballad.

"On Jura's heath how sweetly swell  
The murmurs of the mountain bee!  
How softly mourns the writhed shell  
Of Jura's shore, its parent sea!  
But softer, floating o'er the deep,  
The mermaid's sweet sea-soothing lay,  
That charm'd the dancing waves to sleep  
Before the bark of Colonsay."

And how full of feverish and uncontrollable passion is the mermaid's response to the captive chieftain's allegations of her incapability of participating in the sympathies of human affection,—

“ As cygnet down, proud swell'd her breast;  
 Her eye confess'd the pearly tear;  
 His hand she to her bosom press'd—  
 Is there no heart for rapture here?  
 These limbs, sprung from the lucid sea,  
 Does no warm blood their currents fill,  
 No heart-pulse riot, wild and free,  
 To joy, to love's delirious thrill?”

But we would wander much beyond the limits we have assigned ourselves in this memoir, did we proceed to quote from, or comment upon, this fascinating publication, as our inclination would entice us to do.

The second edition of the *Minstrelsy* experienced rather a dull reception, probably from its following the first too soon, and the eagerness with which the latter was bought up. It has, however, gone through six or seven editions, and must unquestionably be regarded as one of the most valuable accessions to our national literature. The amending, illustrating, and adding to it, continued to be a favourite employment with Scott through life. Mr. Lockhart tells us that he “kept by him, as long as health permitted him to continue his literary pursuits, an interleaved copy of the collection by which his name was first established, inserting such various readings as chance threw in his way, and enriching his annotations with whatever new lights conversation or books supplied.” The edition now publishing under Mr. Lockhart's superintendence, has, therefore, the recommendation of possessing all these emendations, together with much additional information as to incidents, localities, &c. supplied by that gentleman himself. Another valuable improvement is likewise made in the present edition;—the appending of the music of many of the old airs to which the poetry was originally wed.

Although we have said that, on removing to Ashiesteel, in the year 1800, Scott virtually surrendered himself to the bent of his genius, and abandoned whatever longings he might previously have cherished for professional fame and emolument, yet he had by no means come to any deliberate determination within himself on the subject, nor was it until the year 1803, after the publication of the second edition of his “*Minstrelsy*,” that the prudence, if not necessity, of finally making his election between law and literature, was forced on him by a sense of his ripening years, (he was then thirty-two,) and the prospect of an increasing family. This may be regarded as at once the most critical and interesting period of Scott's life, and for the reasons which determined his choice, we believe our readers will desiderate no better explanation than

what he gives us himself in his Introduction to the Lay of the Last Minstrel, written in 1830.

"At this time," (1803,) says he, "I stood personally in a different position from that which I occupied when I first dipt my desperate pen in ink for other purposes than those of my profession. In 1796, when I first published the translation from Burger, I was an insulated individual, with only my own wants to provide for, and having, in a great measure, my own inclination alone to consult. In 1803, when the second edition of the Minstrelsy appeared, I had arrived at a period of life when men, however thoughtless, encounter duties and circumstances, which press considerations and plans of life upon the most careless minds. I had been for some time married—was the father of a rising family, and, though fully enabled to meet the consequent demands upon me, it was my duty and desire to place myself in a situation which would enable me to make honourable provision against the various contingencies of life.

"It may be readily supposed, that the attempts which I had made in literature had been unfavourable to my success at the bar. The goddess Themis is, at Edinburgh, and I suppose every where else, of a peculiarly jealous disposition. She will not readily consent to share her authority, and sternly demands from her votaries, not only that real duty be carefully attended to and discharged, but that a certain air of business shall be observed even in the midst of total idleness. It is prudent, if not absolutely necessary, in a young barrister, to appear completely engrossed by his profession; however destitute of employment he may be, he ought to preserve, if possible, the appearance of full occupation. He should at least *seem* perpetually engaged among his law papers, dusting them, as it were; and, as Ovid advises of the fair,

‘Si nullus erit pulvis, tamen excute nullum.’

"Perhaps such extremity of attention is more especially required, considering the great number of counsellors who are called to the bar, and how very small a proportion of them are finally disposed, or find encouragement, to follow the law as a profession. Hence the number of deserters is so great, that the least lingering look behind occasions a young novice to be set down as one of the intending fugitives. Certain it is, that the Scottish Themis was at this time peculiarly jealous of any flirtation with the muses, on the part of those who had ranged themselves under her banners. \* \* \* \* \*

"The reader will not wonder that my open interference with matters of light literature diminished my employment in the weightier matters of the law. Nor did the solicitors, upon whose choice the counsel takes rank in his profession, do me less than justice by regarding others

among my cotemporaries as fitter to discharge the duty due to their clients than a young man who was taken up with running after ballads, whether Teutonic or national. My profession and I, therefore, came to stand nearly upon the footing on which honest Slender consoled himself with having established with Mrs. Anne Page. 'There was no great love between us at the beginning, and it pleased Heaven to decrease it on farther acquaintance!' I became sensible that the time was come when I must either buckle myself resolutely to 'the toil by day, the lamp by night,' renouncing all the Delilahs of my imagination, or bid adieu to the profession of the law, and hold another course.

"I confess my own inclination revolted from the more severe choice, which might have been deemed by many the wiser alternative. As my transgressions had been numerous, my repentance must have been signalized by unusual sacrifices. My father, whose feelings might have been hurt by my quitting the bar, had been for two or three years dead, so that I had no control to thwart my own inclination; and my income being equal to all the comforts, and some of the elegances of life, I was not pressed to an irksome employment by necessity, that most powerful of motives; consequently, I was the more easily seduced to choose the employment which was most agreeable. This was yet the easier, that in 1800 I had obtained the preferment of Sheriff of Selkirkshire, about £300 a-year in value, and which was the more agreeable to me, as in that county I had several friends and relations. But I did not abandon the profession to which I had been educated without certain prudential resolutions, which, at the risk of egotism, I will here mention,—not without the hope that they may be useful to young persons who may stand in circumstances similar to those in which I then stood.

"In the first place, upon considering the lives and fortunes of persons who had given themselves up to literature, or to the task of pleasing the public, it seemed to me that the circumstances which chiefly affected their happiness and character, were those from which Horace has bestowed upon authors the epithet of the irritable race. It requires no depth of philosophic reflection to perceive, that the petty warfare of Pope with the dunces of his period could not have been carried on without his suffering the most acute torture, such as a man must endure from mosquitoes, by whose stings he suffers agony, although he can crush them in his grasp by myriads. Nor is it necessary to call to memory the many humiliating instances, in which men of the greatest genius have, to avenge some pitiful quarrel, made themselves ridiculous during their lives, to become the still more degraded objects of pity to future times.

"Upon the whole, as I had no pretension to the genius of the distinguished persons who had fallen into such errors, I concluded there could



be no occasion for imitating them in these mistakes, or what I considered as such: and, in adopting literary pursuits as the principal occupation of my future life, I resolved, if possible, to avoid those weaknesses of temper which seemed to have most easily beset my more celebrated predecessors.

“With this view, it was my first resolution to keep as far as was in my power abreast of society, continuing to maintain my place in general company without yielding to the very natural temptation of narrowing myself to what is called literary society. By doing so, I imagined I should escape the besetting sin of listening to language which, from one motive or other, ascribes a very undue degree of consequence to literary pursuits, as if they were indeed the business rather than the amusement of life. The opposite course can only be compared to the injudicious conduct of one who pampers himself with cordial and luscious draughts until he is unable to endure wholesome bitters. Like Gil Blas, therefore, I resolved to stick by the society of my *commis*, instead of seeking that of a more literary cast, and to maintain my general interest in what was going on around me, reserving the man of letters for the desk and the library.”

It has seldom, if ever, happened, we believe, in the annals of literature, that a determination of such a nature has been come to under such circumstances. The labourers in the field of letters consisted, until considerably later than the period we speak of, almost solely of two classes of individuals,—those who took to the occupation simply for amusement, self-improvement, or fame; and those who adopted it as a profession, or means of subsistence. Since then, an entirely new sect of literati have sprung up, or rather manifested themselves, in Great Britain, whose views may be described as an amalgamation of those of their predecessors, uniting at once the objects of pleasure and profit in the pursuit. Nor is it difficult to discern the causes in which their existence has originated. Much, no doubt, is owing to the natural growth of a relish for polite literature in a wealthy, intelligent, and cultivated community; but it must be apparent to every one who has had his eye upon public events, and their results, for the last quarter of a century, that it has mainly ensued from the material alterations in the political condition of society. The change from a state of protracted and consuming warfare, to that of profound peace, affected not more the trading and agricultural interests, than the moral and intellectual faculties of the nation,—but in a converse ratio. The two former experienced a reaction which may not inaptly be compared to that state of prostration which the human frame experiences after the unnatural excitation of a long debauch; and from which it is only now, after eighteen years’ tranquillity, if we may venture to hazard the assertion, beginning to

recover. On the other hand, the sudden closure of those sources of employment and subsistence consequent on a state of external warfare, conjoined with the natural increase of population (unrelieved by outward drainage) attendant on a state of peace, compulsorily directed men's minds into new channels of occupation. In other words, the demand for physical exertion and active public talents being stopped, intellectual amusement or effort was necessarily substituted. Independently of this, the public mind had received too great a moral impetus to stop with the termination of the causes in which it originated. The very social misery which ensued contributed to sharpen men's wits,—driving the educated to mental occupation, as a means of earning, or eking out, a livelihood; and the uneducated into habits of observation, enquiry and reflection, previously dormant. Need we, in corroboration of our remarks, enumerate individually the host of distinguished recruits from the ranks of Bellona, which have of late years enlisted in, and done honour to, those of literature, including, as the list does, the names of a HAMILTON, a HALL, a NAPIER, MARRYAT, and a CHAMIER? Or need we point to the recent great political movements throughout the empire, as evidence of the spirit of investigation and public sentiment which now pervades even the humblest classes of society?

Literature is no longer looked upon, like the stage in former days, as merely the refuge of those unpossessed of steadiness in following out, or patronage or luck for succeeding in, some more definite profession or trade. It has come to be regarded as a field open to all who cannot find a better market for their talents and acquirements; and the public judgment seems to approve of the honourable competition. The lawyer is no longer reckoned unfit for his brief, the soldier his sword, the sailor his quadrant, or the merchant his desk, that he can handle his pen for the instruction or amusement of his fellow-men.\*

As Scott himself says in the preceding quotation, public feeling was very different at that period when he decided upon his future occupation for life. Yet, notwithstanding the revolution which has taken place on the subject, his determination must still be considered as a solecism in the world of letters. He dared to brave the contumely which then attached to a professional apostate, without the palliation of private necessity for his choice; while, at the same time, his pecuniary resources were by no means adequate for the expense of upholding that style in society, which, equally by birth, education, and natural ambition, he

\* It was recently stated in the house of commons, that the majority of the reporters for the London newspapers consist of half-pay or disbanded naval and military officers. The most influential of these journals are edited by accomplished barristers; and even the most obscure of the provincial prints are, generally speaking, under the superintendence of men of ability and education.

felt himself called upon to assume and maintain. He confesses, it is true, that he was in no small degree influenced by hopes of a more substantial kind than the chance profits of his literary labours, for eking out his income,—determined, as he says, to make literature not his crutch, but his staff. These consisted in the chance of obtaining, by the interest of his friends, some one of those easy and profitable, almost sinecure offices of the law, in which many of those who, from want of talent or ambition, fail to distinguish themselves in their profession, ultimately find refuge.

Such expectations, however, were necessarily of a precarious nature, depending, as they did, for their fulfilment, upon the versatile movements of the political wheel of fortune, which were, at that period, both frequent in occurrence, and uncertain in their results.

Scott's resolution, in short, exhibits a singular mixture of prudential caution and moral boldness.\* There can be little doubt that he was internally stimulated to it by the consciousness of his own powers and resources; for no man, however unassuming, arrived at Scott's age, and mixing, as he did, so generally in society, but must have the conviction of his own comparative strength or weakness unavoidably forced on him.

He adopted, at the same time, he says, another resolution. "I determined that, without shutting my ears to the voice of true criticism, I would pay no regard to that which assumed the form of satire. I therefore resolved to arm myself with the triple brass of Horace, against all the roving warfare of satire, parody, and sarcasm; to laugh, if the jest were a good one; or, if otherwise, to let it hum and buzz itself to sleep. It is to the observance of these rules, (according to my best belief,) that, after a life of thirty years engaged in literary labours of various kinds, I attribute my never having been entangled in any literary quarrel or controversy; and, which is a more pleasing result, that I have been distinguished by the personal friendship of my most approved contemporaries of all parties."

It is well, indeed, as it is rare, when authors can adopt and keep a resolution like the above; and Scott's career certainly exhibits a most remarkable example of forbearance, moderation, and equanimity. It is true that the extensive popularity which he almost immediately enjoyed, was of itself a more than sufficing balm for whatever annoyance he might experience from the petulant parodists and waspish Tom Thumbs

\* Mr. Allan Cunningham, we observe, assigns as one of Scott's inducements for abandoning his profession, the increase of fortune which he received by the death of his father, who expired on 14th April, 1799. This, we believe, is a mistake. We have very recently been credibly informed, that he was scarcely one penny richer by that event.

of criticism, who assailed him; but it may be questioned whether he did not, in some instances, carry his indifference, real or affected, to an unjustifiable extent. Silence is not always that of dignity, nor endurance of injuries that of manly toleration. The attack made upon him by Byron, in his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," was so manifestly wanton and unjust, that Scott was sufficiently warranted in leaving his justification in the hands of the public. Not so the strictures on his historical novels, by Dr. McCrie, and other commentators of undoubted candour and ability, to whose criticisms he was either altogether silent, or deigned but a brief and passing reply. But we are anticipating subjects for examination at a more fitting period of our narrative.

Here, then, we are arrived at the actual commencement of Scott's career as an author by profession. He was, at this time, thirty-two years of age; a married man, with two children,—a third, the eldest, named Walter, only lived six weeks. He had then lately removed from a house in South,\* to a more commodious one in North Castle street, in which he continued to reside, while in town, up to the time of Mr. Constable's unfortunate failure in 1825. During the summer, he constantly removed to Ashiesteel, until he became possessed of Abbotsford. His parents were both dead. The few members of his father's family who still survived, were far separated from him; and he was, in short, arrived at that anxious period of life, when all the filial and fraternal ties of early home being extinct or dissevered, a man beholds himself becoming the centre of a new world of domestic care and affection, and feels all the responsibility attached to that condition.

"The first fruits of Scott's defection from the weightier matters of the law was," not as Mr. Cunningham says, the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," but his "Sir Tristrem," a metrical romance; which, although not an original composition, yet, from the light which, by the most indefatigable research, combined with uncommon discernment and sagacity, he threw on its history, and on the obsolete language in which it was composed, together with an exquisite imitation in the shape of a conclusion to the ancient poem, is well entitled to be ranked amongst his poetical works, and to claim particular notice in this place.

It would prove a task equally beyond our limits and the patience of our readers, were we to enter into the discussion respecting the origin of the tale of Sir Tristrem, which has employed the pens and addled the brains of antiquaries for many generations. Its national origin has been claimed by most continental countries, as well as England and

\* No. 19, the street flat of which is now a shop at present occupied by Mr. Douglas, bookseller. His house in North Castle street was No. 39, now occupied by Mr. Macvey Napier, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, &c.

Scotland: and that legends of a similar character, and bearing on the same incidents, existed in the former, long previous to the time of the Scottish bard, is universally admitted. Scott himself shows that such a story was popular both in French and German, antecedent to that period, and it has since been proved, in an erudite work, published in 1821, on the remains of the middle ages, by Von der Hagen, that a romance of Sir Tristrem even existed in the Greek language so early as the thirteenth century.

But the principal cause of confusion respecting the authorship of the existing English version of Sir Tristrem, seems to have been a work entitled "a Chronicle of Cornwall," and said to be written by one "Thomas of Brittany,"—some supposing this Thomas, and not Thomas of Ercildoune, to be the real author,—others identifying them as the same individual.

That such a chronicle did exist, which detailed the legend of Sir Tristrem, is sufficiently proved by the references made to it by the early writers of other countries; and Scott, in his introduction to the romance, states his firm belief that Thomas of Brittany and Thomas of Ercildoune are one and the same. This, however, seems to be doubted by the learned antiquary, Mr. Ellis, chiefly on account of a discrepancy of dates, which the supposition necessarily implies in the introductory essay of Scott himself; and Mr. Lockhart, in his prefatory remarks to the edition just published, (1833) unhesitatingly pronounces the identity impossible.—"That Thomas of Ercildoune," says he, "was well known in *England* as a romance writer, is established beyond all doubt, by the words of De Brunne—

'I see in song of sedgeing tale  
Of Ereeldoune.'——

And that *he* is the *Thomas* who framed that 'sedgeing tale' (tale for recitation) of Tristrem, which had the 'steem over gestes,' appears to be hardly less certain. Assuredly, *that Thomas could never have been the Breton's Chronicler of Cornwall,*" &c. This observation of Mr. Lockhart is made in answer to an attempt made by Mr. Price, (editor of the 8vo. edition of Warton's History of English Poetry, published in 1824,) to dispute the claim of Thomas of Ercildoune to the authorship of Sir Tristrem. Strange enough, Mr. Lockhart does not seem to be aware that his argument cuts two ways, striking equally at Scott's theory of identity, and Mr. Price's of distinctiveness.

Where such authorities differ, it would be presumptuous in us to meddle; and we can only say, that, whatever may become of Scott's theory of identity, it appears to be admitted by all antiquaries of any competent authority,—Mr. Price excepted,—that he has succeeded in demonstrating, with great clearness, the romance edited by him to be

the production of the Bard of Ercildoune,—usually termed “The Rhymer;” although the tale on which it is founded belongs to a much earlier date, and even the original manuscript be not in his handwriting. And if Scott’s position be admitted, it establishes the remarkable fact, that the earliest known poem, in the English language, as well as the purest existing model of the language, and taste of our ancestors, was composed by a native of the Lowlands of Scotland.

Of this ancient poem, concerning the authenticity of which the literary world has been so much divided, only one ancient copy is known to exist. It was presented, along with many other curious literary antiquities, to the Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh, in 1744, by Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck, a lord of session by the title of Lord Auchinleck, and father of James Boswell, the biographer of Johnson. Of its previous history, nothing whatever is known. It forms a thick quarto volume, containing 334 leaves; and, besides Sir Tristrem, contains forty-three other distinct pieces of poetry, most of them mere fragments. The beginning of each poem is supposed to have been originally embellished with an illumination, for the sake of securing which, the first leaf has been, in some places, barbarously mutilated, and in others torn out altogether. It is written on parchment, in a clear and distinct hand, and the character is supposed, by the ablest antiquaries, to belong to the earlier part of the fourteenth century. The pieces are written in various measures of verses, and there are also several variations in the handwriting; but, from the poems regularly following each other, there is no reason to suppose that any of the manuscript belongs to a later or earlier period than the rest. “Many circumstances lead us to conclude,” says Scott, “that the manuscript has been written in an Anglo-Norman convent. That it has been compiled in England there can be little doubt. Every poem which has a particular local reference concerns South Britain alone. Not a word is to be found in the collection relating particularly to Scottish affairs.” Many of the minor poems and fragments appended to Sir Tristrem are of a particularly curious character. Among the rest is one entitled the *History of Adam and his descendants*, which, according to the writer, is of very high antiquity, being compiled by no more modern a personage than *Seth*—

“Tho Seth hadde writen Adame’s liif  
And Eve’s, that was Adam’s wiif  
Right in thilke selve stede,  
Ther Adam was won to bide his bede.”

Seth is said to have deposited his manuscript in Adam’s oratory, where it remained till discovered by Solomon, who, however, not being so expert in deciphering unintelligible characters as some of our modern

antiquaries, could make nothing of it without supernatural assistance. All these minor pieces are conjectured, with probability, to be the compositions of the Rhymmer, but preserved and compiled after his death by others; as, from some passages in the manuscript, it is evident that it was not completed before the year 1330,—nearly forty years after the utmost limit assigned by any antiquary to the bard's existence.

Of the manner in which Scott executed his task as editor, it is unnecessary now to speak. The ablest of our literary antiquaries have long since borne testimony to the extraordinary diligence and sagacity with which the materials were collected, investigated, and arranged. His introduction shows that he sought for information from every quarter where it was possible to obtain it,—from the early historians and poets of foreign countries as well as his own,—from tradition,—from charters, and other MSS., mouldering unheeded and unknown. The explanatory notes and glossary, which were appended to the work, were most copious and satisfactory. “Of the last,” observes Mr. Ellis, “it is sufficient to say, that it explains whatever is not inexplicable; and that we could not, if we wished to do so, point out above three or four passages where the sagacity of the editor appears to have been foiled by the author's obscurity. With regard to the notes, they contain almost an infinite variety of curious information, which had been hitherto unknown or unnoticed; and we are persuaded that they would afford much amusement even to those readers who may be too indolent to derive any from the superannuated poetry of Thomas of Ercildoune. We must therefore conclude, as we began, by expressing our regret that the very limited and scanty edition now printed will preclude many from possessing a work which has been compiled with much labour, and which is no less creditable to the taste and genius, than to the learning of the editor.

The concluding verses of the romance, by Scott himself, afford sufficient evidence of the ardour and success with which he studied the language, turns of expression, and had even contrived to catch the very spirit of the romantic feeling of the olden time. One chief peculiarity of this old poem, it will be observed, is the singularity of the versification and rhythm, which are perfectly unique both in ancient or modern verse, and presents such manifest difficulties in the expressions of poetical sentiment, or even of dry narrative, as to render the adoption of it at so early a period of letters, and with a language scarcely formed, no slight matter of marvel. It is conjectured by Scott, indeed, that it was mainly from his selection of a measure so broken and difficult, and the ease with which he wrought with it, that the Bard of Ercildoune acquired the distinguishing appellation of “The Rhymmer.” If so, Scott himself has shown himself scarcely less entitled to the *soubriquet*,—nay, he has

infused a sweetness and pathos into his imitatory stanzas which are not surpassed, if equalled, in any part of the rude original. As for example, where his maiden wife brings to him the false report respecting the colours hoisted by Ganghardin on his return with Ysonde:—

“Sche weneth to ben awrake  
Of Tristrem the trow,  
Sche seyth,—‘Thai ben blake,  
As piche is thare hewe.’  
Tristrem threw him bake,  
Trewd Ysonde untrew,  
His kind hert it brake,  
And sindrid in two;  
Above,  
Cristes mercie him take!  
He dyed for true love.”

And again in the concluding stanza, where the faithful Ysonde yields up her spirit on the body of her deceased lover:—

“Fairer ladye ere  
Did Britannye never spy,  
I wiche murning chere  
Making on heighe:  
On Tristreme’s bere,  
Doan con she lye;  
Rise agayn did sche nere,  
But thare con sche dye  
For wae:—  
Swiche lovers als thei  
Never shall be mae!”

We have only a few words to add on this branch of our subject, respecting the author of the ancient poem. Thomas of Ercildoune derived his territorial name from the village of Ercildoune, in the county of Berwick, situated on the banks of the Leader, about two miles above its junction with the Tweed, and now well known by the modern appellation of Earlstoun. This village was in ancient times of considerable importance, as being occasionally the residence of royalty, and more than one royal deed still exists subscribed at “Ercheldun,” or “Ercheldu.” One of these is the foundation charter of Melrose Abbey, granted by King David I., and dated in June, 1136. At the western point of the village still stand the ruins of a tower which was the residence of the earliest Scottish poet,—and from what we have said, as far as the mere language at least is concerned, the earliest English poet also. He was possessed of considerable landed property, as appears by a charter (still in existence) granted by his son, of the family estate, after his death, to the Trinity-house of Soultra. Many evidences, indeed, still exist to prove that he was, in his own time, a person of high distinction; associating with noblemen and other dignitaries; testing important docu-



ments, with other circumstances, implying an elevated rank in society. It is the more singular, therefore, that so much doubt should exist respecting his real surname, which circumstance seems to be the prime cause of all the confusion respecting his personal identity. An unvarying tradition assigns to him the name of Learmont; and all writers previous to Scott's time seem to have entertained no doubt of its correctness. Many modern antiquaries, again, consider his name to have been Rhymer, which, it is ascertained, was a proper name in the Merse at that period. In the charter just named, his son designates himself *Filius et hæres Thomæ Rhymour de Ercildoun*; and he is so named in other old documents. But it would be useless here to enter farther into a discussion, which has hitherto baffled all research, and which there is little probability of ever being satisfactorily settled.

The anecdotes concerning the Rhymer, which have been handed down to us, relate principally to his prophetic character; and many of his predictions, with their fulfilment, are spoken of by Wintour, Barbour, Fordun, and others of our earliest Scottish writers. But the story by which he has been long most familiarly known, is his reputed amour with the queen of Faery, whom he wooed and won beneath the famed Eildon tree, and accompanied to her own dominions, where he resided for several years. The traditional tale, which was rendered into verse by Scott, and introduced into the "Border Minstrelsy," bears, that, on his return to "middle earth," the queen of Fairyland communicated to him, in dark and figurative language, many national events which subsequently occurred.

It is a remarkable fact, that some of the predictions attributed to the Rhymer continued to animate the adherents of the unfortunate Stuart family, down even to their last desperate attempt to re-establish its ascendancy in 1745.

We have said that Scott uniformly passed the summer months with his family at Ashiesteel. His intervals of retirement there seem to have been periods of unalloyed enjoyment. The romantic situation of the house,—the commingled wildness and richness of the scenery,—the season of the year,—the sober delights of domestic peace,—and, we may well add, the nature of his intellectual employment, so much in unison with his feelings and genius,—all this, with the possession of a fortune "equal," as he says, "to all the comforts, and some of the elegances of life," presents to us a picture of private independence, which a literary mind might almost be pardoned a sigh of envy in contemplating. In addition, moreover, and as if to fill up the measure of earthly happiness, he was amongst "the friends he loved best." "In point of society," he says, speaking of this oasis in his existence, "we dwelt, according to the heartfelt phrase of Scripture, 'amongst our own

people ;' and as the distance from the metropolis was only thirty miles, we were not out of reach of our Edinburgh friends." We believe we may set this down as the most unalloyed tranquil period of Scott's life.

It was in the autumn of 1804, after the publication of his "*Sir Tristram*," that Scott added another distinguished individual to his already wide circle of friends, in the person of the celebrated traveller, Mungo Park. This acquaintance was of Scott's own making, and it is pleasing to know the cordial and affectionate familiarity which subsisted between these eminent men, and also that it arose from a strong congeniality in their tastes and habits. Park, as is well known, was a native of Selkirkshire, and was born at the farm-house of Fowlshields, on the banks of the Yarrow. His father rented his farm from the Duke of Buccleuch. Mungo, who was the seventh of a family of thirteen, was bred up to the profession of medicine, and served an apprenticeship with Mr. Anderson, surgeon, Selkirk. After completing his studies at Edinburgh, where he distinguished himself by his thirst of knowledge and extraordinary assiduity, he proceeded to London in search of employment. Here, by means of a brother-in-law of his own,—then merely a journeyman gardener, but who, from an origin much more obscure and humble than even Park himself, subsequently raised himself to fame and fortune as one of the first botanists in the kingdom,—he was introduced to Sir Joseph Banks, through whose interest he was selected by the African Association to explore the course of the Niger. Upon his return from his perilous journey, in 1797, he married the daughter of his old master, and not long afterwards settled as a surgeon in Peebles. His adventurous mind, however, pined and fretted under the weary, flat, stale, unprofitable,—and we may add laborious,—routine of a country surgeon's business. In answer to the remonstrances of a friend, respecting the dangers attending another expedition, he replied, that "a few inglorious winters' practice at Peebles would tend as effectually to shorten life as any journey he could undertake." He soon threw up his practice in disgust, and retired with his wife to his paternal mansion of Fowlshields, quite undecided in his future prospects. The remuneration which he had received from the African Association, together with the profits arising from the publication of his travels, meanwhile enabled him to live comfortably. It was at this time that Scott and he became acquainted, and a constant intercourse, by an exchange of visits at each other's residence, was kept up during the short period of the traveller's stay in his native country.

Park was an enthusiastic lover of poetry, more especially the ancient minstrel lays with which his native district was rife; and although he made no pretension to the laurel crown himself, he had occasionally, even from his earliest years, given expression to his feelings and

thoughts in verse. It was not to be wondered at, then, that he should testify a particular predilection for the society of one whose mind and memory were so richly stored with the ancient ballad lore of his country, although his reserve towards strangers in general was carried even to a repulsive degree. Scott has somewhere noticed, in particular, his friend's strong aversion to be questioned, in promiscuous company, on the subject of his adventures, of which grievance, as may be imagined, he had frequent cause to complain. The intercourse of the two friends was, however, doomed to be a short one. Park soon got notice to hold himself in readiness for a second expedition to the Niger; but this circumstance he kept profoundly secret, well knowing the remonstrances he would have to contend with from his friends and relations, with the more affecting appeals of his wife and young family, against a project which had literally engrossed his whole thoughts for years. His intention was generally suspected, however, and amongst others by Scott; and the incident from which he drew his inference was curious enough. Happening one day to ride over to Fowlshields on one of his usual chance visits, Scott was informed that his friend had strolled out. He accordingly alighted, and proceeded on foot up the banks of Park's native stream, in hopes of meeting with him. The channel of the river is there very rocky and uneven, occasioning many deep pools and eddies; and in rounding a corner of the bank, he suddenly came upon Park, who was engaged in a singular manner. He was standing on the brink of one of these pools, into which he, every now and then, plunged a large fragment of rock, and seemed earnestly to watch the bubbles that rose to the surface consequent on its submersion. After observing him for some time, Scott joined him, and asked him jocularly, what he meant by pursuing this "child's play;" when Park replied, in an abstracted manner, that this was the plan he had adopted for determining the depth of the rivers he had to cross in the interior of Africa, judging of their shallowness or profundity by the time which the bubbles took to rise to the surface after plunging in the stone. "From this moment," says Scott, "I had no doubt of his having a second exploratory expedition in contemplation."

The arrangements for Park's second expedition, which had been fixed on so early as 1801, were not completed until the winter of 1805, when he received notice to proceed to London. His parting interview with Scott has been described by the latter in strong and affecting terms. Park paid him a farewell visit at Ashiesteel, where he remained during the night. Next morning, Scott *conveyed* him (to use the Scottish vernacular) part of his way back to Fowlshields, across the wild chain of pastoral hills that divide the vales of Tweed and Yarrow. They were both, of course, on horseback. Park talked much, and with

great animation, of his intended expedition; stating, at the same time, his determination of departing stealthily, under some pretence, to Edinburgh, in order to avoid the distress of a formal parting with his wife and family. At this point of their conversation, the two friends were on the top of William Hoperidge, and "the autumnal mist, which floated slowly and heavily down the valley, presented," says Scott, "a striking emblem of the troubled and uncertain prospect of my friend's undertaking." As it was contemplated that Park should be accompanied in his expedition through the interior of Africa by a small military force, Scott seized the opportunity of remonstrating strongly against this plan, as impolitic and dangerous,—the number of soldiers intended for the duty being, as he thought, insufficient to protect him from an assault by the natives, yet large enough to excite ill-will and suspicion. Park combated these objections of his friend, by describing the divided and disorganized condition of the various petty kingdoms he would have occasion to traverse, which rendered a combined movement against him extremely improbable; and also referred to the circumstance of guarded caravans, and travellers of all nations, being permitted to travel unmolested through these territories, upon paying a small tribute or impost. This interesting conversation occupied the two friends till they came to a part of the moor where they had previously agreed to separate, and where a narrow ditch divided the moor from the public road. In passing over the ditch, Park's horse stumbled and nearly fell under him. Scott, who remained on the other side, observed, half jocularly, half seriously, "I am afraid, Mungo, that is a bad omen;" to which Park replied, smiling, in the words of the old Scottish adage, "Freits follow them that freits follow;"\* and with this proverbial expression, he put spurs to his horse, as if afraid of a ceremonious farewell, and was speedily out of his friend's sight—alas! for ever.

Scott's friendship for Mungo extended itself to the rest of Park's family. It was a brother of the traveller who made a remark to Scott, which the latter used to relate with great glee, and which corroborates what has previously been said respecting his fearless style of riding. They were one day following the chase together, when Archibald Park, remarking the undaunted style in which Scott took (in sportsman's phrase) every thing before him, observed,—“Od, ye'll never halt till ye get a fa' that 'ill send ye hame wi' yere feet foremost!” Sir Walter replied, that when he got upon horseback he felt himself quite changed, entering as it were upon another sort of existence, and having no power of restraint over himself. May we not, in this confession alone, clearly discover the secret of that power of glowing description of the charge and the chase, which flowed from his pen with a force that swept away the feelings of his readers with the strength of the whirlwind?

\* Freely rendered,—Omens attend on those who attend to them.

We have now reached the verge of that period when the history of Scott's life becomes, with a few important exceptions, little else than the history of his numerous publications. At all events, his literary and social character become now so inseparably intermingled, that they must necessarily progress together in our narrative.

It was during his residence at Ashiesteel, in the autumn of 1804, that Scott composed the larger portion of his first great original work, which he completed in the ensuing winter,—the “Lay of the Last Minstrel.” This noble poem, the publication of which constitutes a distinct era in British literature, had been the subject of reflection with him for years; and its different characteristics appear to have had their origin less in design, than in a variety of accidental causes,—or rather, to have been constructed somewhat after the fashion of his future mansion at Abbotsford. Subject, versification, incidental allusion and episode,—all were the result of casual reflection, and adopted at distant intervals: laid out, indeed, more after the manner of a drama than a simple poetical narrative. It is curious to trace the origin and growth of this admirable production. It was during his residence at his cottage at Lasswade, that accident, as he says, “dictated both a theme and a measure;” and the following is his own account of the matter:—

“The lovely young Countess of Dalkeith, afterwards Harriet Duchess of Buccleuch, had come to the land of her husband with the desire of making herself acquainted with its traditions and customs. All who remember this lady, will agree, that the intellectual character of her extreme beauty, the amenity and courtesy of her manners, the soundness of her understanding, and her unbounded benevolence, gave more the idea of an angelic visitant than of a being belonging to this nether world;\* and such a thought was but too consistent with the short space she was permitted to tarry amongst us. Of course, when all made it a pride and pleasure to gratify her wishes, she soon heard enough of border lore; amongst others, an aged gentleman of property,†

\* Scott's enthusiastic testimony to the graces and merits of this lady, who was the daughter of Viscount Sydney, is not less in the language of truth than poetry. In every district of her husband's numerous and princely domains, more especially in the pastoral Border land, the mouth of every inhabitant in every dwelling, is, to this hour, filled with tales of her benevolence, and with blessings on her memory. She seems, indeed, to have been in every respect the prototype of Allan Cunningham's “Lady Ann.” This peerless woman died in 1814, and the poet paid a tribute to her virtues in some exquisite verses, which our limits preclude us from inserting. In one of his letters to Miss Seward, he observes, “that if requested by the Countess of Dalkeith, he would write a poem on a broomstick.” Little did he think at the time, he was to live to write her epitaph.

† This was Mr. Beattie of Mickledale, a man then considerably upwards of eighty, of a shrewd and sarcastic temper, which he did not at all times suppress,

near Langholm, communicated to her ladyship the story of Gilpin Horner, a tradition in which the narrator and many more of that country were firm believers. The young countess, much delighted with the legend, and the gravity and full confidence with which it was told, enjoined it on me as a task to compose a ballad on the subject. Of course, to hear was to obey; and thus the goblin story, objected to by several critics as an excrescence upon the poem, was, in fact, the occasion of its being written." The worth of this objection by the critics we will afterwards canvass at the proper season. In the mean time, respecting the peculiar versification he adopted.

Our readers will recollect of our mentioning a visit which Scott received at Lasswade, from Sir John Stoddart, whilst that gentleman was preparing his work on the local scenery of Scotland. Sir John, it seems, was an ardent admirer of the poetry of the Lake-school, then in the first flush of its reputation; and being personally acquainted with the authors, and possessed of a tenacious memory, he repeated to Scott long *blads* of poems that had not yet appeared in print. One of these, equally from the strength of its language, and the genius displayed in it, especially riveted Scott's attention: and no one who has perused the singular poem, or rather fragment, of "Christabel," will feel much surprise that it did so. This was, moreover, the first time that Scott had heard the irregular structure of stanza used in serious poetry; and its wayward character appeared to him well suited for a tale of romance, and especially for his contemplated extravaganza about Gilpin Horner, from the facilities it afforded in adapting the sound to the sense. Scott, with that manly frankness which particularly marked his literary character, candidly acknowledges his obligation to Mr. Coleridge in this respect, but justly repels the ridiculous insinuations thrown out in various quarters, that he was either a copyist or a parodist of any of the Lake-school poets.

It was more than a twelvemonth, however, after being thus provided with a subject and a measure, that he tried his hand on the first two or three stanzas of the "Lay." These he submitted to the judgment of two\* literary friends, who visited him one day at his cottage, and for

as the following anecdote will show. A worthy clergyman, now deceased, with better good will than taste, was endeavouring to push the senior forward in his recollection of border ballads and legends, by expressing reiterated surprise at his wonderful memory. "No, sir," said old Mickledale; "my memory is good for little, for it cannot retain what ought to be preserved. I can remember these stories about the auld riding days, which are of no earthly importance; but were you, reverend sir, to repeat your best sermon in this drawing-room, I could not tell you, half an hour afterwards, what you had been speaking about."

\* These were, the late William Erskine, Esq. afterwards Lord Kinneder, formerly mentioned; and George Cranston, Esq. now a lord of session, by the title

whose opinions he entertained great deference; and the result was curious enough. The character of the poetry, both as to language and ideas, was so perfectly new to them,—took them so much by surprise,—that they knew not what to make of it. They read and re-read,—pondered—hesitated; and at last got up, took up their hats, and went away without scarcely a syllable of observation. Attributing their very unusual conduct to disgust, which their friendship prevented them from expressing, Scott threw his manuscript into the fire, and digested his vexation as he best could. Not long afterwards, however, one of these same gentlemen inquired, with much interest, after the progress of the romance, confessing the inability of himself and friend to make up their minds for some time about a production so much out of the common road, but that their ultimate decision had been favourable. Encouraged by this information, Scott recommenced his task; and it was now that the idea of putting it in the form of a “sedgeing tale” struck him. He accordingly introduced the old Minstrel as narrator: and from this the poem subsequently took its name.

The work was shown to various friends during its progress; amongst others to Mr. Jeffrey, whose critical acumen enabled him at once to appreciate its beauties. “And thus the poem,” says Scott, “being once licensed by the critics as fit for the market, was soon finished, proceeding at about the rate of a canto a week. There was, indeed, little occasion for pause or hesitation, when a troublesome rhyme might be accommodated by an alteration of the stanzas, or where an incorrect measure might be remedied by a variation in the rhyme. It was finally published in 1805, and may be regarded as the first work in which the writer, who has since been so voluminous, laid his claims to be considered as an original author.”

Respecting the merits and defects of the poem thus originated and brought to completion, it would procure us, we suspect, less credit than ridicule, were we, at this time of day, to proceed to an analysis of them. It was hailed at once and universally as one of the most splendid productions that had ever emanated from British genius; and an undiminished reputation of nearly thirty years’ continuance pretty plainly proves, that novelty was not in this, as in many cases, the chief recommendation to the applause of the cotemporary public. It is questionable, indeed, whether this be not the most entirely delightful of all Scott’s larger poems; for even in those passages where the poetic sen-

of Lord Corehouse,—a gentleman whose eminence and success in his profession can scarcely reconcile us to the loss of his exquisite taste and brilliant talents to the cause of literature. We suspect, however, any question as to the comparative usefulness of the judge and the *littérateur* would be accounted high treason to the sovereignty of common sense.

timent most flags, the interest is sustained by the wildly imaginative character of the narrative, and the strikingly minute descriptions of men and things which belonged, we might almost say, from the complete change since taken place in the character and condition of society, to another world; yet still united with the present by links the most powerful which can enchain the human feelings. These latter passages, indeed, remind us of the dumb, ghostly pageants in Shakspeare's tragedies, which are not of, but still fearfully connected with, the progress of the living drama.

But it is evidently to the author's lucky idea of introducing the old Minstrel, that the work is indebted for much, if not the principal share, of its popularity; and we humbly opine that the critics preceding us have not been sufficiently discerning as to the intrinsic importance of this character to the whole poem. The introductory stanzas at once engage our attention, and take captive our feelings. We would willingly toil through a volume as awfully ponderous, and as dismally dry as the whole combined statutes at large, could we but catch a glimpse, now and then, of the "Latest Minstrel," and a few notes from

"The harp, his sole remaining joy,"

until we had seen and heard all that was to be learnt of or from the "last of all the Bards." There is one circumstance we must here remark, which we do not recollect to have seen any where adverted to before, namely, that it is only from the mouth of one of the Minstrel's calling, that versification so wantonly wayward and varied as frequently occurs throughout the poem, could with any propriety proceed. The character, too, gives occasion for pauses of seasonable repose from the heady current of the narrative; and these parentheses, moreover, are filled up with snatches of the most sublime poetry, perhaps, that is to be found in any age or language. We cannot resist the temptation of extracting one of these fine episodes, which, although certainly not the best of the number, is mournfully appropriate to the object of our present task. It is the introduction to Canto V.

"Call it not vain:—they do not err,  
Who say, that when the poet dies,  
Mute nature mourns her worshipper,  
And celebrates his obsequies;  
Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone,  
For the departed bard make moan;  
That mountains weep in crystal rill;  
That flowers in tears of balm distil;  
Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,  
And oaks, in deeper groans, reply;  
And rivers teach their rushing wave  
To murmur dirges round his grave.



"Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn,  
 Those things inanimate can mourn;  
 But that the stream, the wood, the gale,  
 Is vocal with the plaintive wail  
 Of those who, else forgotten long,  
 Lived in the poet's faithful song,  
 And, with the poet's parting breath,  
 Whose memory feels a second death.  
 The maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,  
 That love, true love, should be forgot,  
 From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear  
 Upon the gentle Minstrel's bier:  
 The phantom knight, his glory fled,  
 Mourns o'er the field he heaped with dead;  
 Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,  
 And shrieks along the battle plain;  
 The chief, whose antique crownlet long  
 Still sparkled in the feudal song,  
 Now from the mountain's misty throne,  
 Sees in the thanedom, once his own,  
 His ashes undistinguished lie;  
 His place, his power, his memory die;  
 His groans the lonely caverns fill;  
 His tears of rage impel the rill:—  
 All mourn the Minstrel's harp unstrung,  
 Their name unknown, their praise unsung."

We have said that the character of the goblin who acts such a conspicuous part in the drama, has been objected to, by various critics, as an "excrescence" on the poem; which means, we apprehend, something which might have been dispensed with. How they could come to this conclusion, we are totally unable to conceive. We certainly cannot agree with Mr. Cunningham, that "we might as well take the sap from the tree, in the hope that it will live," as take away the goblin from the story; but he is assuredly correct, when he says that "the interest of the poem depends upon the supernatural, and that the supernatural was the belief of the times of which the poet gives so true an image." The only feasible fault which can, in our opinion, be objected to the imp, is his nondescript character. He is neither brownie, fairy, warlock, nor ghost—in short, he belongs to none of the agnized tribes of imps or worricows peculiar to Scotland; nor, so far as we are aware, any other country. Our imagination can picture nothing like this being, but the little grinning red-cowled goblin that figures in the Temptation of St. Anthony. The story on which his character is founded, as related by Mr. Beattie, and which he got, he said, from an old man named Anderson, a native of the place (Todshawhill of Eskdale-muir) where the goblin appeared, is as follows. Two men were *tethering* their horses, late one evening, upon their outfield pasture for the night, when

they heard a voice, at some distance, crying, "*tint, tint, tint,*" (lost) when one of them, named Moffat, called out, "What deil's tint you? come here." Upon which a creature appeared, with something like a human form, but surprisingly little, distorted in features, and misshapen in limbs. The two men instantly took to their heels homewards, but the goblin followed them, and Moffat having fallen by the way, it ran over him, and upon getting to his house he found it already there. It abode with the family a long time; was undoubtedly flesh and blood; ate and drank with the rest; was particularly fond of cream, which it stole on every opportunity. It was besides very mischievous in disposition, and beat and scratched the children who provoked it, without mercy. But that it was not entirely destitute of feeling of a certain description, is evident from the following incident: One of the children having one day struck it such a blow on the side of the head that it tumbled over, it immediately started up, exclaiming, "Aha, Will o' Moffat, but you strike sair!" It was often heard calling on some one named Peter Bertram, who—whether man, warlock, or devil—appears to have been its master, from the circumstances attending its disappearance. Whilst playing with the children one evening, a loud shrill voice was heard to call out three times "*Gilpin Horner!*" Starting up, it exclaimed, "*That is me, I must away,*" observing, at the same time, that it was the voice of Peter Bertram that called for him. It accordingly disappeared, "and they saw it no more."

Such is the sort of being to whom Scott assigns a very important part in the plot of his story. And it really seems, at first sight, somewhat provoking, if not derogatory to the dignity of his poem, that a creature of such undignified propensities as the licking of cream and the scratching of children, should be made the agent for influencing the result of battles and the fate of noble families. But this objection again is partly met by the fact, that the imp works most of his miracles by the power of the "book of gramarye," of which he possesses himself. At all events, the poet had tradition for the existence of his goblin-page; and even had he not, he was surely as well entitled to an imp of his own creation as any son of ignorance during the days of superstition. To conclude, who can cherish an angry feeling with the goblin, when we are told that but for him the poem would never have been written at all?

We would fain tarry awhile over the beauties of this noble production, our old love for it having lately received a fresh impulse by an examination of the beautiful edition just published, with many valuable notes and explanations by the erudite editor. As almost every line, however, has long since been the subject of criticism, and, independently of that, must be familiar to every reader of any pretension to taste, we

feel the propriety of proceeding onwards to another stage of our journey, which is yet a long one.

The *Lay* was published in quarto, at the price of 1*l.* 5*s.*, by Longman and Company of London, and Archibald Constable and Company, Edinburgh. "The work, brought out on the usual terms of division of profits between the author and publishers, was not long after purchased by them for £500, to which Messrs. Longman and Company afterwards added £100, in their own unsolicited kindness, in consequence of the uncommon success of the work. It was handsomely given to supply the loss of a fine horse which broke down suddenly, while the author was riding with one of the worthy publishers." The gentleman here alluded to was Mr. Rees: such an incident, thus acknowledged, is honourable to all parties.

The success of the work was, we believe, almost without precedent. Every tongue was eloquent with praise, and redolent of quotation. In Scotland, the sentiment of applause was mingled with that of wonder. It was so entirely out of the usual channel of their national poetry, yet spoke the chivalric spirit of old Scotia with such fervour and truth, that even their sorrow for the loss of poor Burns, then recent and poignant, was for awhile forgotten in exultation at the appearance of a successor who could strike the national lyre with a bolder sweep, if not with equal pathos. The "*Lay*" went through six editions in two years, and Scott himself informs us, (1830) that upwards of thirty thousand copies of the poem were sold by the trade; and in stating this, observes, very truly, as every one will agree, "that he had to perform a task difficult to human vanity, when called upon to make the necessary deductions from his own merits in a calm attempt to account for his popularity." That he expected considerable success he freely confesses, but, as will be better seen in the sequel, the result went far beyond whatever expectations he could have formed, however extravagant. His genius attracted the attention of those in high places—even of royalty itself: and the consequences to his future fortunes were as effectually and permanently beneficial, as gratifying in the manner in which they came.

It is much to be regretted, that the manuscript of this, Scott's first great poem, was not preserved by him. The fact, however, affords another proof of the entire absence of vanity in his nature, and shows how perfectly free was his manly mind from all that paltry self-conceit which so often disfigures the character of successful literary men. Had he anticipated how precious such a document was afterwards to become, in a sense more urgent than attaches to a mere literary curiosity, there is little doubt the fact would have been otherwise.

## CHAPTER IV.

FROM HIS APPOINTMENT AS CLERK OF SESSION IN 1806, TO THE PUBLICATION OF "VISION OF DON RODERICK" IN 1811.

THERE can scarcely be a more pleasing object of contemplation than the career of a man raising himself above the sphere and circumstances of his original condition,—“achieving greatness,” as the poet hath it—solely by his own genius and industry. Scott had not much to contend with, certainly, in obtaining an independence considerably more than sufficient to secure to any man of common prudence, every thing that the poet, at least, seems to have considered necessary to human comfort, for the rest of his life.\* But this very circumstance—the certainty of being secured against future indigence—is what we regard as affording the most indubitable proof of the active energy of Scott’s genius, and as one of his strongest claims to the admiration of mankind. The indolence of literary men, after the exciting cause, be it for fame or fortune, that first stimulated them to exertion, is past—from the time of Thomson, lying in bed all day, because, as he alleged, he had “no motive” to rise, down to others of the present time, whose early manifestations gave equal, if not greater, promise of future excellence—is notorious. How many instances have we not seen of men of the most undoubted talents dropping out of their position in the literary world; and, in too many instances, alas! out of the ranks of society altogether, into obscurity, indigence, and misery. The causes (for there are many) of all this, it would be a question too lengthy, as well as too painful, to enter upon in this place—

“’Tis true,—’tis pity; pity ’tis ’tis true!”

Indolence, however,—indolence, want of energy and perseverance, be the authors necessitous or independent, is undoubtedly one of the most general causes of a falling off in literary reputations. It is therefore, we repeat, what we reckon one of the highest points of excellence in Scott’s character, moral as well as intellectual, that, unstimulated by

\* “P. What riches give us, let us, then, enquire.

Meat, fire, and clothes. B. What more? P. Meat, clothes, and fire.

Is this too little? Would you more than live?

What can they give?

*Pope’s Moral Essays.*

necessity, and even afterwards, when he had fondly believed himself in the possession of a magnificent fortune, and a fame that had no parallel (or only one) in the annals of literature, his pen was as busy as if the mouths he fed depended on his activity for the supply of their wants.

Let us think for a moment,—“what if Scott, satisfied with his happy independence, and still happier prospects, had settled himself down in easy indolence, discharging perhaps all the duties of a good member of society, in the conventional meaning of the phrase, but distinguished for nothing else, perhaps, than the goodness of his dinners, or, at best, the faithful fulfilment of his office as a country magistrate?” This is the true way of putting the position to the test. The loss to the cause of literature is the least consideration in this supposition; and we leave to the philanthropist to calculate the amount of human enjoyment, and that of the highest kind, which would thereby have been lost. But the question assumes a more substantial form, when we reflect upon the impulse which industry and the fine arts have received by the exuberant genius of this one man. How many thousands of individuals, from the printer to the book-binder, have derived, are deriving, and will continue to derive subsistence from the labours of his single pen? This is a point in the economy of society which seems to have been hitherto entirely overlooked in judging of the comparative merits of literary men among their fellows. People never seem to consider that a voluminous author, if he does nothing else, confers the greatest of all possible benefits on an immense portion of those who are somewhat too exclusively termed the “working classes,” by giving them the means of honest employment. And too often, alas! the man who is effecting all this may himself be the while pining in obscurity and starvation!—his only reward, perhaps, for all the good he has done to his fellow creatures, abuse or ridicule. It is so far well that such was not the fate with the subject of our narrative.

We have said that hopes had been held out to Scott of his obtaining some one of the lucrative and easy situations connected with the court of session, and in 1805 the prospect of an appointment of this nature opened upon him. Mr. George Home, one of the principal clerks of session—and it may be remarked, one of the original writers in the “Mirror,”—after holding his office upwards of thirty years, about this time found it necessary, in consequence of advanced age and infirmities, to retire, and Scott was induced to offer himself as successor. The office is in the gift of the crown, and Scott had already secured by his own merits, not only the favorable notice of royalty itself, but of those by whom royalty is generally guided in the distribution of its public favours. Mr. Pitt was then in power, and his admiration of the “Lay of the last Minstrel” was such as to lead him to express a wish to Scott’s

personal friend, the right honourable William Dundas, now lord clerk register for Scotland, that he would point out the first opportunity wherein he (Mr. Pitt) could serve the author. Thus the appointment Scott now sought for was in a manner secured to him beforehand. It was not to be immediately profitable to him, however. "As the law then stood, such official persons were entitled to bargain with their successors, either for a sum of money, which was usually a considerable one, or for an interest in the emoluments of the situation during their life. My predecessor, whose services had been usually meritorious, stipulated for the emoluments of the office during his life, while I should enjoy the survivorship, on the condition that I discharged the duties of the office in the mean time." Upon this understanding the commission was made out and signed by his majesty George III., who, it is credibly stated, remarked on the occasion, "that he was happy he had it in his power to reward a man of such distinguished merit." All was thus completed, with the exception of the payment of fees; and Scott, who had come to London with his predecessor's resignation, was in hourly expectation of receiving the other document, when the nation was stunned to the centre by the sudden demise of the illustrious Pitt, which took place on the 23d of January, 1806. The "Fox and Grenville administration," as is well known, succeeded, and being entirely on the other side of politics from their predecessors, Scott found it necessary to make interest with the new ministry for the passing of his grant. Mr. Fox, who, no less than his political rival, was an ardent admirer of Scott's genius, at once acceded to the request. Upon looking into the document, however, it was found that, either through hurry or mistake, Mr. Home's interest had been entirely omitted in it, by which, had Scott died before him, the old gentleman would have lost the emoluments of the office which it had been stipulated he should retain. Scott, therefore, declined receiving it in such a state, and applied to have it made out afresh in the proper terms. This was, of course, immediately complied with, and the new document ordered to be drawn up; but the directions accompanying the order were somewhat at variance with the formality usual on such occasions, and, besides, so inconsistent with the well known disinterested generosity of character which distinguished the great man then at the head of affairs, that we record the circumstance with as much regret as we learned it with surprise. But the fact, although not mentioned by Scott himself, is, we believe, beyond a doubt, that Fox directed that it should be made out as a favour coming *directly* from his own administration. As such an understanding, from the punctilious jealousy which then existed between the rival factions, was reckoned as implying either some compromise or desertion of principle on the part of the expectant, (then well known to be a zealous tory,) or

was, at least, a breach of the understood etiquette which precluded an opponent of the ministry from accepting a public office in their gift, the noblemen (Lords Stafford and Somerville) who had chiefly interested themselves in Scott's appointment, made a representation to Earl Spencer on the subject. The poet himself had likewise an interview with that nobleman, who at once admitted the force of the objection, and ordered the commission to be made out as originally proposed,—adding, “that the matter having received the royal assent, he regarded only as a claim of justice what he would have willingly done as an act of favour.” The grant was made out accordingly, and Scott's interest placed beyond all further danger of “mistakes,” whether designed or accidental.

The question occurs—what, if any, was the motive of Mr. Fox for testifying a solicitude in having it thought that the grant was a personal act of his own? The precarious elevation of his party at the time certainly made it natural that he should wish to conciliate the favour of a man of such popular genius, besides possessing so many influential friends, as Mr. Scott. But Fox's well known enthusiasm in literary matters, together with his utter contempt of all selfish cajolery, renders it just as probable, on the other hand, that it was done solely with a view to secure Scott's friendship, merely as a man of talent. Be it as it may, it is certain that Fox manifested a strong desire to cultivate a personal intimacy with the poet, and, as we are informed, even tempted the latter with an invitation to his residence at St. Ann's Hill, for the purpose of showing him some MSS. which might prove useful in compiling the life of Dryden, which Scott was then understood to be engaged with. Such flattering overtures, however, the unhappy state of the political world prevented Scott from answering in the manner his inclinations doubtless prompted him to do. All he says in reference to the preceding transaction is, that, “in his private capacity, there is no man to whom I would have been more proud to owe an obligation, had I been so distinguished.” But he seems to have thought it proper at the same time to remark,—“I never saw Mr. Fox on this, or any other occasion, and never made any application to him, conceiving that in so doing I might have been supposed to express political opinions contrary to those which I had always professed.”

But if Scott really felt in any way dissatisfied with the conduct of Mr. Fox in the above matter, he had prudence and good feeling enough to smother his resentment in his own bosom; and the publication of his next great poem, “Marmion,”—sufficiently evinced that neither private pique nor political hostility could obscure his sense of the great public talents and public virtues of that illustrious statesman. Fox, as is well known, followed his great rival to the grave in the short space of eight

months,\* and the introduction to *Marmion* contains, perhaps, the most splendid tribute to the merits of both that ever was poured forth over the bier of departed greatness. It is more than splendid; it is affecting even to tears.

“Nor mourn ye less his perished worth  
Who bade the conqueror go forth,  
And launched that thunderbolt of war  
On Egypt, Hafnis,† Trafalgar;  
Who, born to guide such high emprise  
For Britain’s weal, was early wise;  
Alas! to whom the Almighty gave,  
For Britain’s sins, an early grave;  
His worth, who, in his mightiest hour,  
A bauble held his place of power,  
Spurned at the sordid lust of pelf,  
And served his Albion for herself.”

\* \* \* \*

“Oh, think how, to his latest day,  
When death, just hov’ring claimed his prey,  
With Palinure’s unaltered mood,  
Firm at his dangerous post he stood;  
Each call for needful rest repelled,  
With dying hand the rudder held,  
Till, in his fall, with fateful away,  
The steerage of the realm gave way!

“Nor yet suppress the generous sigh,  
Because his rival slumbers nigh:  
Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb  
Lest it be said o’er Fox’s tomb,  
‘For talents mourn, untimely lost,  
‘When best employed, and wanted most;’†  
Mourn genius high and lore profound,  
And wit that loved to play, not wound;  
And all the reasoning powers divine,  
To penetrate, resolve, combine,

\* He died on the 13th September, 1806.

† Copenhagen. The poet, in the passage preceding our extract, pays a tribute scarcely less splendid to the memory of the scarcely less illustrious Nelson, who fell at Trafalgar on the 21st October, 1806. We may here observe, that it is the *poetry* and not the *political sentiment*, in these quotations, we wish to place before our readers.

‡ “To explain the seeming inconsistency,” says Mr. Chambers, “of this expression with Sir Walter’s general opinions on politics, it may be mentioned that the whole couplet, with inverted commas, was written by the late Marquis of Abercorn, (the patron and employer of Sir Walter’s father, and afterwards of his brother Thomas,) and inserted at his express request, while the sheet was in proof.”



And feeling keen, and fancy's glow,—  
They sleep with him who sleeps below !"

•        •        •        •        •  
" When Europe crouched to France's yoke,  
And Austria bent and Prussia broke,  
And the firm Russian's purpose brave  
Was bartered by a timorous slave.  
Even then, dishonour's peace he spurned,  
The sullied olive-branch returned,  
Stood for his country's glory fast,  
And nailed her colours to the mast!  
Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave  
A portion in this honoured grave ;  
And ne'er held marble in its trust  
Of two such wondrous men the dust!  
With more than mortal powers endowed,  
How high they soared above the crowd !  
Theirs was no common party race,  
Jostling by dark intrigue for place ;  
Like fabled gods, their mighty war  
Shook realms and nations in its jar ;  
Beneath each banner proud to stand,  
Looked up the noblest of the land,  
Till through the British world were known  
The names of Pitt and Fox alone !"

The following lines, besides being replete with the noblest feeling and most generous sentiment, contain a figure which is, we believe, perfectly unique in the annals of poetry. It is true, perhaps, that never another such occasion presented itself for the conception of the like image.

" Genius and Taste and Talent gone,  
Forever tombed beneath the stone,  
Where, taming thought to human pride!  
The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.  
Drop upon Fox's grave the tear  
'Twill trickle to his rival's bier ;  
O'er Pitt's the mournful requiem sound,  
And Fox's shall the notes rebound.  
The solemn echo seems to cry,—  
' Here let their discord with them die ;  
Speak not for those a separate doom  
Whom Fate made brothers in the tomb,  
But search the land of living men,  
Where wilt thou find their like again ? "

And with the following beautiful expression of affectionate gratitude for their mutual kindness to himself, the poet concludes his lofty monody o'er the twin-ashes of " Genius departed."

"Rest, ardent spirits! till the ories  
 Of dying nature bid you rise;  
 Not even your Britain's groans can pierce  
 The leaden silence of your hearse:  
 Then, oh! how impotent and vain  
 This grateful tributary strain.  
 Though not unmarked from northern clime,  
 Ye heard the Border Minstrel's rhyme:  
 His Gothic harp has o'er you rung,  
 The Bard you deigned to praise, your deathless name has sung."

Before leaving the subject which led us into the above quotations, it may be mentioned that nearly six years elapsed ere Scott began to enjoy the emoluments, whilst discharging the duties, of his appointment as principal clerk of session; at which period the provision of a retiring annuity to superannuated officers was substituted for the disreputable system of allowing them to dispose of their places by private traffic. Upon this, Mr. Home handsomely surrendered up all interest in his former office to his successor, who was thereby admitted to the full benefits of the situation.

It was an odd enough coincidence, and one which occasioned no little "talk" at that time of political excitement, that the appointment of Walter Scott, a zealous tory, to the situation of principal clerk of session, was announced in the same Gazette, (March 8, 1806,) which contained the nomination of Messrs. Erskine and Clerk to the offices of lord advocate and solicitor general, just vacated, according to custom, by the late tory holders, Sir James Montgomery and Mr. Robert Blair. It is also remarkable, that at this period, Lord Melville, who, with his kinsman, the Honourable William Dundas, had exerted himself most zealously to obtain Scott's preferment, was now under impeachment of the house of commons, for supposed high crimes and misdemeanours.

If Scott's appointment was fortunate for himself, it may be regarded as no less fortunate for the world. At the period we speak of he maintained both a country and town residence; and in the latter at least, he lived in a style of liberal hospitality which, with his other expenses, must have required the prudent expenditure of every penny of his income, which could not then be much above £700 a year. It must, besides, be kept in mind that he had a young family rising around him, whose future provision must be cared for. Had the above, or a similar situation, therefore, not speedily opened up to him, there is the strongest probability, that, however much attached to the muses, and however much favoured by them, he would have unceremoniously bid them good bye, and, as he expresses it, buckled himself resolutely to "the toil by day, the lamp by night," in the labours of his profession. His moral courage was fully adequate to the sacrifice; and although his talents

as a lawyer may not have been of the first order, yet the host of influential friends who were now banded around him were sufficient to assure him of the certainty of adding several hundreds a year more to his income. His distrust of the stability of popularity seems, indeed, to have been a sort of active principle within him throughout life, although, as he confesses, he experienced little of its fickleness in his own person. We have now before us a proof of his jealous caution in this respect, even at a late period of his life; and we are induced to give it both for the reason mentioned, and because it affords another unanswerable contradiction (if any indeed be necessary) to the calumny so often reiterated against his fair fame, of an indifference to, if not a paltry jealousy of, the merits of young authors. This letter is dated in 1821, and addressed to a gentleman who had transmitted him a newly published poem of his own composition, with an intimation of his resolution to abandon the service of the muses:—

“From the opinion which I have been enabled to form of the piece, after a hasty revisal, I think you are rash in renouncing the pursuit of letters, although I would by no means recommend that you should sacrifice to that pursuit the time which must necessarily be employed in the graver and duller studies which lead to an honourable independence. Literature, undertaken as a means of living, is very apt to degrade its professors; but when it comes in aid of those whose livelihood is independent of success with the public, it always exalts their character, and very often adds materially to their fortune. I hope, therefore, you will use your taste for poetry as a staff on which to lean occasionally, but not as a crutch to trust to for constant support. Let your studies, therefore, relieve your labours in the weightier matters of the law, and you will find that your chance of attracting the public attention, when you again make such an effort, will be greater the less you appear to need it: and if the caprice of the public should pass over your merit without notice, you will have the consoling reflection that they may withdraw praise, but cannot affect your independence.

“Perhaps I should have said more of — (the piece) and less of the author, but I have arrived at that age when the young poet is more interesting to me than the poem, though I think the latter very respectable as a display of immature talent.—I am, sir, with regard, your obliged servant,

WALTER SCOTT.”

We ask, is not this epistle, written to an entire stranger, dictated in the truest spirit of friendship and kindness? We could heap instance upon instance to the same effect, but we would reckon our doing so in the spirit of vindication, as something like an insult to the memory of the dead. Scott's own modest justification of himself in this respect, could be echoed by many a grateful heart. “Let me add,” says he,

in his introduction to the *Lady of the Lake*, penned in 1830, "that my reign (since Byron has so called it) was marked by some instances of good nature as well as patience. I never refused a literary person of merit such services in smoothing his way to the public as were in my power; and I had the advantage," he adds, "rather an uncommon one with our irritable race, to enjoy general favour, without incurring permanent ill-will, so far as is known to me, among any of my cotemporaries."

Now, happily secured, as we have seen him, with a comfortable harbour in his old age, Scott instantly turned his thoughts again to composition; and we can fancy with what fervid delight he looked round and found himself at last free to devote the whole faculties of his mind to the pursuits of his choice. But, however great his enthusiasm and success as a votary of the muses, experience had taught him caution. Criticism had not been thrown away upon him: and he resolved to bestow more pains upon his future productions. Scott mentioned to a friend, at a late period of his life, that after the publication of his first two or three works, he was nervously alive to the strictures of the reviewers, but that he soon became perfectly indifferent to them, and seldom perused a criticism on his writings during the long period of his voluminous authorship. Meanwhile, as a sort of interlude to his weightier contemplations, he collected his minor poems and ballads, and published them, in 1806, in a small volume. The collection consisted of his "*Helen and William*," and the "*Wild Huntsman*," with those he had written for Mr. Lewis's "*Tales of Wonder*," all of which we have before noticed at sufficient length. After the same he had obtained by the "*Lay*," the republication of these juvenile poems could only be justified by the inducements held out to him to do so by the booksellers, to whom popularity, however deserved, is at all times a more welcome commodity than unknown merit. They now opened upon the scent of the young author's rising fame with the eagerness of the wild *Jager* himself, and in the same year actually brought out a fine-paper edition of his whole poems in five volumes. It was, of course, to the popularity of the "*Lay*," that this adventure owed its success, which was considerable; the minor poems only doing the service of the weights attached to the tail of a kite. In the new edition of his poetical works, we observe that the editor has added to these earlier productions several poems, some of which were written many years afterwards, and appeared in various periodicals of the day; others, to which no date whatever is attached. The principle upon which these latter pieces appear to have been selected, is the convenience of their size: an arrangement of which we cannot help questioning the propriety. One of the chief points of interest connected with our subject, is the gradual development of the

author's powers,—an investigation which such indifference to chronological order unavoidably confuses. The poet of 1796 was a very different being from the poet of 1820, and we are rather surprised that a sentiment expressed in one of these minor poems just published as if connected with the era of 1806,—and which, at whatever period written, certainly does its author little credit,—did not instruct the learned editor respecting the impropriety of the proceeding:—

“ Though April his temples may wreath with the vine,  
 Its tendrils in infancy curl'd,  
 'Tis the ardour of August matures us the wine  
 Whose life-blood enlivens the world.”

“Marmion” was the next production of Scott's muse. It appeared in 1808, and its success far exceeded that of the “Lay.” The world had already felt the power of the author, and, despite the captiousness of criticism, were prepared to welcome a second effort. Like his previous poem, “Marmion” consists of six cantos; but instead of the prologues and epilogues of the old minstrel, each canto is introduced by an episode in the form of a familiar epistle to a friend. The names of the gentlemen thus distinguished deserve to be mentioned. These were, William Stewart Rose, Esq., the Rev. John Marriot, M. A.; William Erskine, Esq.; (afterwards Lord Kinneder;) James Skene, Esq.; George Ellis, Esq., the celebrated antiquary; and Richard Heber, Esq.\* These epistles were all dated from Ashiesteel, and the author speaks of the period of their composition as being a peculiarly happy one; “so much so,” he says in 1830, “that I remember with pleasure at this moment some of the spots in which particular passages were composed.” In these epistles, “I alluded,” he continues, “perhaps more than was necessary or graceful, to my domestic occupations and amusements—a loquacity which may be excused by those who remember that ‘out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’”

We have heard an anecdote connected with this period of his life, related by a lady, which, if not of much general interest, is at least illus-

\* Whilst writing, we observe in the newspapers an announcement of the death of the eminent bibliophilist. The literary stores which he had collected were altogether unprecedented. His residence in Pimlico, London, where he died, was filled with books from top to bottom—every chair, every table, every passage containing piles of books. He had another house in Broadway, laden from the ground floor to the garret, with curious books. He had also a library at Oxford, another at Hodnet, an immense one at Paris, another at Antwerp, another at Brussels, another at Ghent, and at other places in the low countries and in Germany. It has been calculated by a London journalist, that should these extensive possessions be sold by auction, the sale would, on the most moderate calculation, occupy 365 days!

trative of the character of the poet at that time. She had been residing along with other visitors with the family at Ashiesteel for some days, and had fixed a certain afternoon on which to take her departure. The day, however, turned out so cold, rainy, and boisterous, as to deter her from setting out. The evening—it was the month of November—drew on, drizzly and gloomily, and despite the appliances of music and cards, a feeling of dreary sadness, sympathetic with the atmosphere without, gradually stole over the company within. Scott was not amongst them—he was shut up in his study, and, as afterwards appeared, busily engaged with “*Marmion*.” Upon coming in to tea, he perceived how matters stood with his guests, and as nothing gave him more uneasiness than to see any one unhappy around him, he made a strong exertion—invited them into his *forge*, as he playfully termed it, and having arranged them comfortably round the fire, proceeded to pour out upon them such a store of wild legendary tales and traditions, in the most rapid succession, that his auditory sat entranced around him till far on in the night. The lady we allude to declared, that a night of such agitating interest—such alternate terror and delight—she never passed. It was like a night of the “*Decameron*.” This is the only instance we ever heard of, where Scott broke through his rigid rule of exclusion from his *studio*, in favour of strangers.

We have noticed his determination to bestow more pains on his future works; and, accordingly, particular passages of *Marmion* were, as he states, “laboured with a good deal of care by one by whom much care was seldom bestowed.” But his prudent purpose was in a great measure defeated, and the publication of the poem was prematurely hastened by a casualty which, if it detracted any thing from the credit of his fancy, served to reflect immeasurable honour on the warmth of his heart. He thus distantly alludes to the unfortunate circumstance.

“The misfortunes of a near relation and friend, which happened at this time, led me to alter my prudent determination, which had been, to use a great precaution in sending this poem into the world; and made it convenient at least, if not absolutely necessary, to hasten its publication. The publishers of the “*Lay of the Last Minstrel*,” emboldened by the success of that poem, willingly offered a thousand pounds for ‘*Marmion*.’ The transaction being no secret, afforded Lord Byron, who was then at general war with all who blacked paper, an opportunity to include me in his satire, entitled ‘*English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.’ I never could conceive how an arrangement between an author and his publishers, if satisfactory to the persons concerned, could afford matter of censure to any third party. I had taken no unusual or ungenerous means of enhancing the value of my merchandise,—I had never higgled a moment about the bargain, but accepted at once

what I considered the handsome offer of my publishers. These gentlemen, at least, were not of opinion that they had been taken advantage of in the transaction, which indeed was one of their own framing; on the contrary, the sale of the poem was so far beyond their expectation, as to induce them to supply the author's cellars with what is always an acceptable present to a young Scottish housekeeper, namely, a hogshead of excellent claret.

"The poem was finished in too much haste to allow me an opportunity of softening down, if not removing, some of its most prominent defects. The nature of *Marmion's* guilt, although similar instances were found, and might be quoted, as existing in feudal times, was nevertheless not sufficiently peculiar to be indicative of the character of the period, forgery being the crime of a commercial rather than a proud and warlike age. This gross defect ought to have been remedied, or palliated. Yet I suffered the tree to lie as it had fallen. I remember my friend, Dr. Leyden, then in the east, wrote me a furious remonstrance on the subject. I have, nevertheless, always been of opinion, that corrections, however necessary, have a bad effect after publication. An author is never so decidedly condemned as on his own confession, and may long find apologists and partisans, until he gives up his own cause. I was not, therefore, inclined to afford matter for censure out of my own admissions; and by good fortune the novelty of the subject, and, if I may say so, some force and vivacity of description, were allowed to atone for many imperfections. Thus the second experiment on the public patience, generally the most perilous,—for the public are then most apt to judge with rigour what, in the first instance, they had received perhaps with imprudent generosity, was, in my case, decidedly successful."

We have thought it right to allow Scott to give his own explanation of the circumstances connected with the publication of "*Marmion*," as every fault, *at least*, many of which arose, as he states, from the unexpected haste in which it was brought out, was dwelt upon with relentless severity by some critics of the day. They could not know, it is true, the generous motive in which these defects originated or were passed over; but there appears a sort of wanton spirit of vituperation in the way in which every thing faulty was pounced upon and mumbled over, while many of the chief beauties of the poem were unnoticed. We allude in particular to the *Edinburgh Review*, then in the hey-day of its power, and in which the writers did not always remember the scriptural precept about meting their castigation by their strength. Campbell, Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth, Byron, and others, had all been subjected to the inflictions of the critical knout, in some cases with an unsparring rigour that savoured fully as much of personal or political

vindictiveness as literary acumen ; and it was not to be supposed that a victim so worthy of its lash, and who exposed his broad shoulders to the infliction with such tempting unguardedness as Scott, would be suffered to go scatheless. Mr. Jeffrey, moreover, by whom the work was reviewed, appears to have conceived no little spite at the poet on account of the latter persevering in some peculiarities of composition, which the critic had severely censured in the "Lay." The lash, accordingly, descended with an energy proportionate to the offence offered to so high a judicature—luckily not beyond the victim's powers of endurance. It is worth while pausing a little over these strictures, and comparing the opinions expressed in them with those which the public, in despite of such high authority, thought proper to adopt. The italics are our own.

After precluding with a string of critical arcana for determining the merits of epic composition in general, he proceeds:—

"For these and for other reasons, we are inclined to suspect, that the success of the work now before us will be less brilliant than that of the author's former publications, though we are ourselves of opinion, that its intrinsic merits are nearly, if not altogether equal; and that, if it had had the fate to be the elder born, it would have inherited as fair a portion of renown as has fallen to the lot of its predecessors. It is a *good deal longer*, indeed, and somewhat more ambitious; and it is *rather clearer*, that it has greater faults than that it has greater beauties, though for our own parts, we are inclined to believe in both propositions. It has more flat and tedious passages, and more ostentation of historical and antiquarian lore; but it has also greater richness and variety, both of character and incident; and if it has less sweetness and pathos in the softer passages, it has certainly more vehemence and force of colouring in the loftier and busier representations of action and emotion. The place of the prologuising minstrel is but ill supplied, indeed, by the *epistolary dissertations* which are prefixed to each book of the present poem; and the ballad pieces and mere episodes which it contains, have less finish and poetical beauty; but there is more airiness and spirit in the higher delineations; and the story, if not more skillfully conducted, is at least better complicated, and extended through a wider field of adventure. The characteristics of both, however, are evidently the same; a broken narrative—a redundancy of minute description—bursts of unequal and energetic poetry—and a general tone of spirit and animation, unchecked by timidity or affectation, and unchastised by any great delicacy of taste, or elegance of fancy."

The petulant spirit of assumption, and almost of ridicule, in which most of these remarks concerning one of the noblest poems that ever enriched literature are dictated, must surely have cost the learned critic



many subsequent pangs of shame and regret. But what follows, is a still higher flight of judicial arrogance:—

“But though we think this last romance of Scott’s about as good as the former, and allow that it affords great indications of poetical talent, we must remind our readers, that *we* never entertained much partiality for this sort of composition, and ventured on a former occasion to express our regret, that an author endowed with such talents should consume them in *imitations of obsolete extravagance*, and in the representation of manners and sentiments in which none of his readers can be supposed to take much interest, except the few who can judge of their exactness. *To write a modern romance of chivalry, seems to be much such a phantasy as to build a modern abbey, or an English pagoda.\** For once, however, it may be excused as a pretty *caprice of genius*; but a second production of the same sort is entitled to *less indulgence*, and *imposes a sort of duty to drive the author from so idle a task*, by a fair exposition of the faults which are, in a manner, inseparable from its execution.”

In pursuance of this doughty resolution, for which the world and the poet ought to have been about equally grateful, the reviewer proceeds to assault the poem in five different quarters at once. In the first place he says, that “there is scarcely matter enough in the main story for a ballad of ordinary dimensions.” In the second place, “the denouement is brought out in a very obscure, laborious, and imperfect manner;” “the leading incidents fatigue instead of exciting the curiosity” of the reader; and “all the images” of one of the scenes “are borrowed from the novels of Mrs. Ratcliffe and her imitators.” In the third place, “the whole story seems to turn upon a tissue of incredible accidents.” Fourthly, the “figuring characters” are “entirely worthless:” and, finally, complaint is made of “the neglect of Scottish feelings and Scottish character that is manifested throughout.”

So much for the imputed faults of the fable: to the style, the reviewer objects a bead-roll of blemishes scarcely less numerous and fatal. In particular, he complains of the “unsufferable minuteness of those descriptions of ancient dresses and manners,” which “render so many notes necessary.” “We object to these and all such details, because they are, for the most part, without dignity or *interest* in themselves; because, in a modern author, they are evidently unnatural; and, in a *good* degree, obscure and unintelligible to ordinary readers.”

We certainly will not be presumptuous enough to measure swords with the learned critic; but we cannot help remarking, that the amount

\* The poet, curiously enough, seems to have subsequently attempted to realise this “phantasy” in his mansion of Abbotsford.

of praise which he doles out to sweeten the asperity of his strictures, is, in our opinion, excessively meagre, if not in many places absolutely equivocal. His warmest expressions of approbation are "lively," "spirited," "sweet," and so forth; and to only one passage—the description of the battle—he accords the term of "powerful poetry." His complaint about the minuteness of Scott's descriptive passages is certainly an extraordinary one, as from these, it has been generally imagined, the poem derives the greater share of that vividness of interest, that power of carrying back the mind of the reader to the scenes of former days, which we humbly reckon one of its principal attractions.

With regard, again, to what is said of the neglect of Scottish feelings and Scottish character—a charge which the poet must have winced under more acutely than any other—what grounds are there for the allegation? The story is not intended to be a Scottish one, and those transactions which are made to take place in Scotland are mere adjuncts, if we may so call them, to the main plot. It may be questioned, indeed, if the poet did not allow his feelings of nationality, of which no man had a larger portion, to carry him into digressions therewith connected, injurious to the interest of the main story. But whilst the scenes *are* within the bounds of his native land, there is "Scotland" glowing in every line; and this power of impressing a national stamp on all his scenes and characters, we may observe, is one of the most prominent and fascinating peculiarities of Scott's genius, and pervades alike his poems and prose works. Allan Cunningham tells us, that soon after the publication of "Ivanhoe," Chantrey asked him one day how he liked it. "I said the descriptions were admirable, and that the narrative flowed on in a full stream, but I thought in individual portraiture it was not equal to those romances where the author had his foot on Scottish ground." "You speak like a Scotsman," said Chantrey; "I must speak like an Englishman:—the scenery is just, and the characters in keeping. I know every inch of ground where the tournament was held—where Front de Bœuf's castle stood, and even where that pious priest, the Curtal Friar, had his cell by the blessed well of St. Dunstan—what Rob Roy is to you, Ivanhoe is to me." It was in this power of *nationalising* all his scenes and characters, we repeat, that Scott's great strength lay. With respect to his display of it in "Marmion," we conceive nothing can be more thoroughly, more graphically Scottish than the scene which the hero surveys from Blackford Hill—the Scottish army encamped in the Borough-muir—the smoky outline of the town—the Firth of Forth—the Fife coast—North Berwick Law, and the distant Ochils:—

"Still on the spot Lord Marmion staid,  
For fairer scene he ne'er surveyed.

2 D

When sated with the martial show  
 That peopled all the plain below,  
 The wandering eye could o'er it go,  
 And mark the distant city glow  
     With gloomy splendour red;  
 For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,  
 That round her sable turrets flow,  
     The morning beams were shed,  
 And tinged them with a lustre proud,  
 Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.  
 Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,  
 Where the huge castle holds its state,  
     And all the steep slope down,  
 Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,  
 Piled deep and massy, close and high,  
     Mine own romantic town!  
 But northward far, with purer blaze,  
     On Ochil mountains fell the rays,  
 And as each heathy top they kissed,  
 It gleamed a purple amethyst.  
 Yonder the shores of Fife you saw,  
 Here Preston-Bay and Berwick-Law;  
     And, broad between them rolled,  
 The gallant Firth the eye might note,  
 Whose islands on its bosom float  
     Like emeralds chased in gold;  
 Fitz-Eustace' heart felt closely pent,—  
 As if to give his rapture vent,  
 The spur he to his charger lent,  
     And raised his bridle-hand,  
 And making demi-volte in air,  
 Cried, 'Where's the coward that would not dare  
     To fight for such a land!' "

There is surely nothing like "indifference to Scottish feeling" in these lines. As regards "Scottish character" again, we have certainly no Andrew Fairservices, or Dandie Dinmonts, or Bailie Nicol Jarvies in the poem, as these would have been somewhat awkward personages in a tale of chivalry. But are not the portraitures of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, and old Bell-the-Cat, and King James himself, and the descriptions of the motley hosts who composed his army, in strict keeping with history, and the character of the times?

After all, it need scarcely be observed, that no poem of the length and character of *Marmion* could be composed either without many defects, or at least parts comparatively destitute of interest; and to lay hold of these latter passages, and analyze them according to the rigid classical rules of the *ars poetica*, in preference to others of a more engaging character, seems to us the very wantonness of critical license. The many great and undeniable beauties of the poem, moreover—the

originality of conception—the splendour of diction—the patriotic sentiments displayed in it, ought, in our opinion, to have conciliated the favour of *national* criticism at least; and we cannot but think that the expression of a little more gratulation at the appearance of so great a national poem, and a little less testy impatience of its faults, would have been more becoming on the part of the reviewer. But there are certain moods of the mind, in which a man finds a morbid satisfaction in disputing the correctness of judgment of the whole “varsal world,” and in one of these bilious fits Mr. Jeffrey’s criticism appears to have been penned. Besides, the Edinburgh reviewers were at this time, as Scott says of Byron, “at war with all who blacked paper;” and to testify a sympathy with popular feeling in literary matters, would have been entirely “out of keeping.”

There is a story current concerning the above memorable criticism, which, although we cannot attest its truth, yet, from the length of time during which it has passed uncontradicted, so far as we know, we reckon ourselves entitled to record in this place. It is said that after the article was in type, Jeffrey carried the proof-sheet in his pocket to Scott’s house, and after sitting down at dinner with his friend, laid the review before him. Scott glanced over the sheets, nodding his head now and then good-humouredly, and saying, “Very well—very well,” when Mrs. Scott, whom the courteous manner of her husband had not deceived, snatched them from his hand as he was returning them to the critic, and after running over the article, exclaimed with a glowing face as she threw it from her,—“I wonder at the hardihood which penned such a criticism, and more at the boldness of bringing it to this table.” The poet, it is said, took no notice of this observation, and the critic, it may be believed, had little wish to provoke farther comment.

The public had little fellow-feeling with the Edinburgh Reviewers. They were not to be whipped out of their admiration of these “imitations of obsolete extravagance.” *Marmion* rose at once into greater popularity than even his previous poem. “The return of sales before me,” says the author in 1830, “makes the copies amount to thirty-six thousand between 1805 and 1825, besides a considerable sale since that period.” Scott long afterwards mentioned to a friend, that the only period of his life when he was in danger of becoming vain, was on the publication of *Marmion*. “That work,” he said, “had given him a great *heeze* in the public estimation, and carried him almost off his feet”—but he resisted the impulse, and it fled from him for ever.

The description of the battle of Flodden Field seems to be almost universally acknowledged as the most completely soul-engrossing of any similar scene that occurs either in ancient or modern song. The reader perceives the hosts gathering together from all points to the “banquet

of slaughter," with a feeling of awful interest in the result; and from the beginning to the end of the conflict, he feels himself absolutely involved in all the fearful alternations of the struggle. "The whirlwind of action," says Mr. Cunningham finely, "and the varied vicissitudes of a heady and desperate fight, are there—yet not one word is said inconsistent with history; he has imposed his own ideal scene upon us for the reality of truth. From the moment that Surrey passes the river, till the close of the catastrophe, the reader has no command over himself, but is hurried here and there at the will of the enchanter. He charges with Home and with Gordon; snatches with the fiery Blount the banner of Marmion from the ground; aids Fitz-Eustace in bearing his wounded lord from the press of Scottish spears; charges with Stanley; changes sides, and, spear in hand, makes good the desperate ring which protected the wounded king of Scotland. There is a spell upon the reader. Every character and scene is invested with something so natural and national, so original and so peculiar, while the whole is emblazoned with Scotland—Scotland; the rough-bearded thistle and the warning Latin legend represent her no better."

Scott possessed the true secret of the art of depicting battles. His notions on this subject will at once be perceived by the following little anecdote, which is told us by the industrious Mr. Chambers. Whilst sitting to Mr. Watson Gordon for his picture, not long before the close of his life, he was shown a small painting by that distinguished artist, representing a battle. "This is not the thing at all," said he, in reference to the clearness and multitude of the figures; "when you want to paint a battle, you should in the first place get up a gude stour [cloud of dust]; then just put in an arm and a sword here and there, and leave all the rest to the spectator."

After the publication of "Marmion," "Flodden Field" became again, after the lapse of centuries, an object of immediate general interest to the inhabitants of the sister kingdoms. Crowds of pilgrims flocked to the site of that fatal combat, to ponder over the scene where

"The flowers of the forest were a' wede away,"—

to seek out the exact spot where "the last words of Marmion" were shouted forth; and to listen in imagination for the renewed thundering of the mortal strife. An amusing enough anecdote is connected with this reawakened enthusiasm in the public mind towards that memorable spot, for which we are also indebted to Mr. Chambers, who had it from a friend to whom Scott personally communicated it. We give it in the poet's own words. "When Marmion came out, it made a considerable noise, and had its day, no doubt; and many people went to see Flodden Field; so that an honest fellow thought it would be a good speculation to

set up a public-house upon the spot, for the accommodation of the visitors: and he sent to me, asking me to write a few lines for a sign he was going to erect, thinking, as his letter told me, that any thing from me would have a good effect. I sent him back word, that I was at present a good deal occupied; but begged to suggest, as a next best, a quotation from the book which had occasioned his undertaking, which, I remarked, would do very well with a slight alteration—taking out the letter *r*—

“ ‘Drink, weary pilgrim, drink and p(r)ay.’ ”\*

Before quitting “*Marmion*,” we must shortly advert to Scott’s allusion in the introduction to the new edition of his poems, to the attack made upon him by Byron, regarding the sale of that work to the publishers. The circumstance of £1000 having been given for a modern poem, was certainly a novelty in literature; and Miss Seward, among others, spoke of it at the time in terms of suitable astonishment. But the transaction was assuredly as legitimate a one as the disposal of Milton’s great poem for £12, or Cowper’s for £15, whatever undue discrepancy there might be between the respective merits and prices of the three works. Times had altered as regarded the public estimation of literary talent, and Scott had the undisputed possession of the public attention; and in these two circumstances consist the “head and front of his offending” in the matter. No one can be silly enough to suppose, that Milton or Cowper would have reckoned themselves, or been reckoned by others, degraded, had they received £1000, instead of £12 or £15, for their productions. We are rather inclined to suppose they would have pocketed such an affront with great complaisance, and that posterity would by no means have thought the less of them either as men or poets for having done so.

But it is only what is due to the memory of Scott, to record a fact respecting the pecuniary arrangements of his literary concerns, which is, perhaps, even more rare in the annals of authorship, than his uncommon success. It is, that the terms of recompense had always to be proposed by the bookseller himself.† He did not, like the majority of his literary brethren before and since, go the round of the publishing shops, offering his talents to the highest bidder. On the contrary, until an offer was made to him, he would say nothing whatever on the sub-

\* “Drink, weary pilgrim, drink and pray  
For the kind soul of Sybil Grey,  
Who built this croos and well.”

*Vide Canto IV.*

† It must be understood that we do not here allude to his subsequent intercourse with Mr. Constable, posterior to the publication of “*Waverley*.” That connection will form a separate subject of investigation by itself.

ject; but after it *was* made, he was almost sure to close with it at once, and without higgling.

But Byron's affected contempt of Scott's imputed mercenary dealings with the "trade," was merely a pretence assumed as a feasible excuse for dealing him a blow. It was Scott's well known intimacy with Jeffrey, Brougham, and the other champions of the "Blue and Yellow," and not his concerns with Messrs. Longman and Constable, which procured him the distinction of the noble Bard's invective. The occasion of the latter's wrath with the Edinburgh Reviewers has been so long well known, that it is only necessary to glance shortly at the affair.

During his residence at Cambridge University, and when scarcely twenty years of age, Byron published a volume of minor poems, entitled "Hours of Idleness." Of these effusions it is unnecessary to say more, than that while they gave little indication of that powerful genius which afterwards rose on the world with the splendour, if not with something of the terrors, of a meteor, they nevertheless exhibited proof of no mean poetic talent, as the popularity of several of them at the present day sufficiently evinces. That many of them were somewhat ambitious in their style, is true; but there was certainly none of that extravagant pretence either in language or sentiment, which, in the opinion of the world, renders the aspirant a fair object of rebuke and correction. Unfortunately, however, as it afterwards turned out, he published the volume as being the production of "A Minor;" and although, we dare say, it will be allowed that there was nothing very heinous in this implied claim to nobility, yet it seems to have been almost the only motive for a most merciless stricture on his effusions, that shortly afterwards appeared in the Edinburgh Review. We are unwilling, for many reasons, to dwell upon this criticism, in which, to use the moderate language of Scott in speaking of it afterwards, the writer "yielded to that sin which most readily besets our fraternity, the temptation, namely, of showing our own wit, and entertaining our readers with a lively article, without much respect to the feelings of the author, or even to indications of merit which the work may exhibit." The review was read, and raised mirth; the poems were neglected; and the critic had the consolation of thinking that he had fairly annihilated the hopes and ambition of a *titled* author.\*

Never was there a greater miscalculation; and never, since the days

\* Byron, it is said, never knew who was the author of this criticism; nor does it appear that actual certainty yet generally prevails on this subject. Public belief, however, and we have reason to think with justness, now assigns it to the present Lord Chancellor Brougham. Jeffrey, it is stated, refused to give up the name of the writer, unless in a personal interview with the noble bard—which never took place.

of Pope, did a retaliation so severe and unexpected, fall from the pen of irritated poet. The effect of the criticism upon him is described to have been fearful. "A friend, who found him," says Moore, "in the first moments of excitement after reading the article, enquired anxiously whether he had received a challenge? not knowing how else to account for the fierce defiance of his looks." It would, indeed, be difficult for sculptor or painter to imagine a subject of more fearful beauty than the fine countenance of the young poet exhibited in the collected energy of that crisis. His pride had been wounded to the quick—his ambition humbled:—but this feeling of humiliation lasted but for a moment. The very reaction of his spirit against aggression roused him to a full consciousness of his own powers, and the pain and shame of the injury was forgotten in the proud certainty of revenge. Byron himself mentions, that on this eventful day he drank three bottles of claret after dinner; but that he could find relief from nothing but rhyme, and, after composing about twenty lines, "he felt himself considerably better."

In the satire to which Byron gave birth, his revenge was not confined to the writer of the remarks which had so fearfully stirred his gall. Almost every author or critic of the period, and even several individuals little connected with literature, felt the severity of his lash. But it was upon the devoted heads of the Edinburgh Reviewers that the tempest of his wrath expended its bitterest fury; and his lines upon the editor himself, however unjustly and injuriously personal, afford, perhaps, the raciest specimen of poignant and searching sarcasm penned in modern times. Our reasons for passing them by here, need not be explained. What Byron's motive was for attacking Scott, we are at a loss to imagine; unless it be that he was led to suspect the latter of a connivance with the injurious criticism on his own writings in the Review. As these two illustrious men are now no more, and full and satisfactory explanation was exchanged betwixt them on the subject during their lives, we do not think ourselves guilty of any injustice to the memory of either in here quoting a few of the angry couplets. After ridiculing the principal characters in Scott's two larger poems, the noble bard continues:

And think'st thou, Scott! in vain conceit perchance,  
On public taste to foist thy stale romance,  
Though Murray with his Miller\* may combine  
To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?†

\* "The poem," said the indignant bard, "was manufactured for Messrs. Constable, Murray and Miller, for a sum of money, and truly, considering the inspiration, it is a very creditable production." It is almost needless to remark, that all this is absurd.

† We believe this calculation is rather under than over the mark. Byron's curiosity must have been great indeed, to induce him to such an investigation.



No! when the sons of song descend to trade,  
 Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade.  
 Let such forego the poet's sacred name,  
 Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame!  
 Low may they sink to merited contempt,  
 And scorn remunerate the mean attempt!  
 Such be their meed; such still the just reward  
 Of prostituted muse and hireling bard!  
 For this we spurn Apollo's venal son,  
 And bid a long "good night to Marmion!"

But Byron's notice of Scott in this satire, was not altogether in the vituperative vein, either. The following lines, which occur towards the conclusion, in part atone for the bitter invective of those just quoted, and show that their author, even in the whirlwind of his wrath, was as capable of appreciating, as candid in acknowledging, the great powers of his brother poet. After re-enumerating, in the language of derision or reproach, the names of almost all the great poets then before the British public, as men from whose pens it was in vain to expect any thing worthy of the muse, he returns to Scott in the following mingled strain of eulogy and reproach:—

"But thou, with powers that mock the aid of praise,  
 Should'st leave to humbler bards ignoble lays;  
 Thy country's voice, the voice of all the nine,  
 Demand a hallow'd harp—that harp is thine.  
 Say, will not Caledonia's annals yield  
 The glorious record of some nobler field  
 Than the vile foray of a plundering clan,  
 Whose proudest deeds disgrace the name of man?  
 Or Marmion's acts of darkness, fitter food  
 For outlaw'd Sherwood's tales of Robin Hood?  
 Scotland! still proudly claim thy native bard,  
 And be thy praise his first, his best reward!  
 Yet not with thee alone his name should live,  
 But own the vast renown a world can give;  
 Be known, perchance, when Albion is no more,  
 And tell the tale of what she was before;  
 To future times her faded fame recall,  
 And save her glory, though his country fall!"

Few circumstances ever took place in the literary world, which occasioned, in fashionable phraseology, so great a "sensation" as the appearance of the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." It bore evidence of such a vigour of intellect and command of diction, that the public hailed it, despite all its improper personalities, as the production of a wonderful genius,—the more wonderful from the extreme youth of the author, who was just then in his twenty-first year. The contemp-

tuous derision of the critic was fairly turned against himself in the public estimation; whilst from those, whom his ill-judged effusion had drawn in to be partakers of his punishment, it was not to be expected he would receive much sympathy. But although this production must unquestionably be considered as the first stepping-stone to Byron's literary eminence, there is no true friend of the noble poet's memory, but must wish that it had never been penned. We have, at least, ample evidence of the poignant regret it afterwards caused himself; for, notwithstanding the impetuosity of his unregulated passions, there was never a human being, perhaps, more utterly free from every thing akin to vindictiveness or malevolence than the unhappy "Childe." He was, indeed, one of those who are too much alive to their own faults and imperfections, to nourish a permanent feeling of enmity with their fellow-mortals; and severely as his errors have been judged by the world, he still found the most unrelenting censor in his own bosom.

The first edition of the satire, which was published anonymously, was sold off in a few months. To the second, the author's name was prefixed, and he immediately afterwards went abroad. Upon its arriving at the fifth edition, Byron wrote home in anxious terms to have it suppressed, and every exertion was made to put the work out of existence. In a copy of it, belonging to Mr. Murray, his publisher, which the author happened to peruse after he had left England, in 1816, never to return, were afterwards found sufficient proofs of repentance for this ebullition of youthful resentment. On the first leaf of it was written—"The binding of this volume is considerably too valuable for the contents. Nothing but the consideration of its being the property of another, prevents me from consigning this *miserable record of misplaced anger, and indiscriminate acrimony, to the flames.* B."—Throughout the pages were scribbled, opposite to almost all the passages satirising the various characters introduced, expressions of regret and self condemnation,—such as "savage," "mere insanity," &c.; and he concludes his confessional with the following remark:—"The greater part of this satire I most sincerely wish had never been written; not only on account of much of the critical, and some of the personal parts of it, but the tone and temper are such as I cannot approve."

It was not until after Lord Byron's return from abroad, in 1812, that any direct intercourse took place betwixt him and Scott: and the account given by the latter of the abridged and interrupted term of their correspondence, is so redolent of amiable feeling, that it becomes imperative on us, in our task of developing the qualities of his mind, to give it as nearly as possible in his own words. It is proper we should here state that this account is chiefly taken from "Moore's Life of By-

ron," having been communicated to the noble poet's biographer by Scott, during the compilation of that interesting work.

After alluding to the criticism on Byron's works in the *Edinburgh Review*, and stating that he (Scott) had at the time remonstrated with the editor against its admission; he adverts in terms of characteristic gentleness to Byron's unjustifiable out-pouring of bile upon himself; speaks of it as merely a piece of flagellation which he suffered in company with "his betters," and that Byron had, on the other hand, paid him, in the other passages, so much more praise than he deserved, that he must have been ridiculously irritable not to sit down contented. He then tells us:—

"I was very much struck, with all the rest of the world, at the vigour and force of imagination displayed in the first cantos of *Childe Harold*, and the other splendid productions which Lord Byron flung from him to the public, with a promptitude that savoured of profusion. My own popularity as a poet was then on the wane, and I was unaffectedly pleased to see an author of so much power and energy taking the field. Mr. John Murray happened to be in Scotland that season, and as I mentioned to him the pleasure I should have in making Lord Byron's acquaintance, he had the kindness to mention my wish to his lordship, which led to some correspondence."

Before proceeding farther with Scott's account of this interesting intercourse, it is requisite that we advert to one or two collateral circumstances. In the first place, we are informed by Mr. Moore, that along with the wish expressed through Mr. Murray, for Byron's friendship, Scott sent his brother bard a present of a superb Turkish dagger. This circumstance, as will be afterwards seen, the former notices in a somewhat confused manner, and seemingly as if it had taken place at a subsequent period of their acquaintance, when Byron returned the compliment by a similar testimony of friendship. Again, it does not appear from Scott's statement, or any other evidence we can discover, with whom the "correspondence" originated. We are inclined to think, however, that it was with Scott himself; and this more particularly from the date and introductory sentence of the following letter from Byron to him; the other contents of which, moreover, demand a prominent place in the substance of our present memoir.

"St. James' Street, July 6, 1812.

"Sir,—I have just been honoured with your letter. I feel sorry that you should have thought it worth while to notice 'the evil works of my nonage,' as the thing is suppressed *voluntarily*, and your explanation is too kind not to give me pain. The satire was written when I was very young and very angry, and fully bent on displaying my wrath and my

wit, and now I am haunted by the ghosts of my wholesale assertions. I cannot sufficiently thank you for your praise; and now, waving myself, let me talk to you of the Prince Regent. He ordered me to be presented to him at a ball; and after some sayings, peculiarly pleasing from royal lips, as to my own attempts, he talked to me of you and your immortalities; he preferred you to every bard past and present, and asked which of your works pleased me most. It was a difficult question. I answered, I thought the 'Lay.'\* He said his own opinion was nearly similar. In speaking of the others, I told him that I thought you more particularly the poet of *Princes*, as *they* never appeared more fascinating than in 'Marmion,' and the 'Lady of the Lake.' He was pleased to coincide, and to dwell on the characters of your Jameses, as no less royal than poetical. He spoke alternately of Homer and yourself, and seemed well acquainted with both; so that, with the exception of the Turks, and your humble servant, you were in very good company. I defy Murray to have exaggerated his royal highness' opinion of your powers, nor can I pretend to enumerate all he said on the subject; but it may give you pleasure to hear that it was conveyed in language which would only suffer by my attempting to describe it, and with a tone and taste which gave me a very high idea of his abilities and accomplishments, which I had hitherto considered as confined to *manners*, certainly superior to those of any living *gentleman*.

"This interview was accidental; I never went to the levee; for having seen the Courts of Mussulman and Catholic sovereigns, my curiosity was sufficiently allayed; and my politics being as perverse as my rhymes, I had 'no business there.' To be thus praised by your sovereign, must be gratifying to you; and if that gratification is not alloyed by the communication being made through me, the bearer of it will consider himself very fortunately and sincerely your obliged and obedient servant,

BYRON."

Scott's narrative proceeds:—

"It was in the spring of 1815, that, chancing to be in London, I had the advantage of a personal introduction to Lord Byron. Report had prepared me to meet a man of peculiar habits, and a quick temper, and I had some doubts whether we were likely to suit each other in society. I was most agreeably disappointed in this respect. I found Lord Byron in the highest degree courteous and even kind. We met for an hour or two almost daily, in Mr. Murray's drawing-room, and found a great

\* This interview, it must be kept in mind, was subsequent to the appearance of the "Lady of the Lake," and "Don Roderick," the poems that succeeded "Marmion."

deal to say to each other. We also met frequently in parties and evening society, so that for about two months I had the advantage of considerable intimacy with this individual. Our sentiments agreed a good deal, except upon the subject of religion and politics, upon neither of which I was inclined to believe that Lord Byron entertained very fixed opinions. I remember saying to him, that I really thought that if he lived a few years, he would alter his sentiments. He answered, rather sharply, 'I suppose you are one of those who prophecy I will turn methodist?' I replied, 'No—I don't expect your conversion to be of such an ordinary kind. I would rather wish to see you retreat upon the Catholic faith, and distinguish yourself by the austerity of your penances. The species of religion to which you must, or may, one day attach yourself, must exercise a strong power on the imagination.' He smiled gravely, and seemed to allow I might be right.

"On politics he sometimes used to express a high strain of what is now called 'liberalism;' but it appeared to me that the pleasure it afforded him as a vehicle of displaying his wit and satire against individuals in office, was at the bottom of this habit of thinking, rather than any real conviction of the principles on which he talked. He was certainly proud of his rank and ancient family; and, in that respect, as much an aristocrat as was consistent with good sense and good breeding. Some disgusts, how adopted I know not, seemed to me to have given this peculiar, and, as it appeared to me, contradictory cast of mind; but at heart I would have termed Byron a patrician on principle.

"Lord Byron's reading did not seem to me to have been very extensive, either in poetry or history. Having the advantage of him in that respect, and possessing a good competent share of such reading as is little read, I was sometimes able to put under his eye objects which had for him the interest of novelty. I remember, particularly, repeating to him the fine poem of *Hardyknute*, an imitation of the old Scottish ballad, with which he was so much affected, that some one in the same apartment asked me what I could possibly have been telling Byron, by which he was so much agitated.

"I saw Byron for the last time, in 1815, after I returned from France. He dined or lunched with me at Long's in Bond street. I never saw him so full of gaiety and good humour, to which the presence of Mr. Mathews, the comedian, added not a little. Poor Terry was also present. After one of the gayest parties I was ever present at, my fellow-traveller, Mr. Scott of Gala, and I set off for Scotland, and I never saw Lord Byron again. Several letters passed between us—one, perhaps, every half year. Like the old heroes in Homer, we exchanged gifts. I gave Byron a beautiful dagger, mounted with gold, which had been the property of the redoubted Elfin Bey. But I was to play the part of

Diomed in the Iliad, for Byron sent me, some time after, a large sepulchral vase of silver. It was full of dead men's bones, and had inscriptions on two sides of the vase. One ran thus:—'The bones contained in this urn were found in certain ancient sepulchres within the land wall of Athens in the month of February, 1811.' The other face bears the lines of Juvenal.

'Expende—quot libras in duce summo invenies,  
—Mors sola fatetur quantula hominum corpuscula.'

JUV. x.

To these I added a third inscription in these words:—'The gift of Lord Byron, to Walter Scott.' There was a letter in this vase, more valuable to me than the gift itself, from the kindness with which the donor expressed himself towards me. I left it naturally in the urn with the bones, but it is now missing. As the theft was not of a nature to be practised by a mere domestic, I am compelled to suspect the inhospitality of some individual of higher station,—most gratuitously exercised certainly, since after what I have here said, no one will probably choose to boast of possessing this literary curiosity.

"We had a good deal of laughing, I remember, on what the public might be supposed to think or say, concerning the gloomy and ominous nature of our mutual gifts.

"I met him very frequently in society; our mutual acquaintances doing me the honour to think that he liked to meet with me. I was considerably older, you will recollect, than my noble friend, and had no reason to fear his misconstruing my sentiments towards him; nor had I ever the slightest reason to doubt that they were kindly returned on his part. If I had occasion to be mortified by the display of genius which threw into the shade such pretensions as I was then supposed to possess, I might console myself, that in my own case, the materials of mental happiness had been mingled in a greater proportion."

We have thought it incumbent on us to insert this authentic and most interesting account of the friendly intercourse which subsisted between the two greatest poetical geniuses, undoubtedly, then living. The cordiality of their friendship is the more pleasing to contemplate, equally from the rivalry of their fame, and the fact that no two individuals ever existed, perhaps, the constitution of whose minds and tempers, whether proceeding from nature, education, or circumstances, were so essentially different; the one overflowing with animal hilarity, and enjoying life for its own sake; the other cursed with a temperament so diseased, as to justify, with mournful truth, the observation of Goethe,—that he was inspired with the genius of Pain.

The friendship of the two poets, after the above period, suffered no

interruption save from the distance which divided them. That they mutually and unaffectedly regarded each other as the greatest poet of the day, is evident. We have already seen the terms in which Scott speaks of the superior claims of his noble friend to that distinction; and in the posthumously published correspondence and journals of Byron, numerous passages occur wherein he unqualifiedly assigns the laurel crown to his then untitled rival. One of these is curious enough: "He (Scott) is undoubtedly the monarch of Parnassus, and the most *English* of bards. I should place Rogers next in the living list—(I value him more as the last of the *best* school,) Moore and Campbell both *third*,—Southey, and Wordsworth, and Coleridge, next—the rest, *oi walla*!—then follows a figure sketched out in the form of a triangular pyramid, divided into different sections for the various classes of poets he has enumerated. Upon the very pinnacle is written, "W. Scott;" then follow the names of the others in the order he has assigned them; and in the section at the base is written, "The Many,"—thus including himself, of course, in the last and humblest class of the muse's votaries. It must be observed, however, that this self-humiliating allocation was made antecedent to the birth of "Childe Harold," which, in the world's opinion, and not less in Scott's, raised him at one step from the base to the pinnacle of Parnassus, to the dethronement of the former possessor.

Upon the publication of the third canto of "Childe Harold," in 1816, it was criticised in the Quarterly Review, in an article, which, along with an animated,—we might say enthusiastic,—exposition of the many beauties of that lofty poem, contains an analysis of the mental structure and habits of thinking peculiar to the noble poet. The tone of the latter, besides being remarkable for its depth of philosophic acuteness, is dictated in the kindest spirit of Christian philanthropy. Aware that he is dealing with no common mind, that can be laughed or lectured out of its fitful moods, the writer, in adverting to the unhappy and misanthropic hue of the poet's thoughts, endeavoured, by strong argument and gentle reproof, to awaken him to a sense of the unmanliness, the criminality of cherishing such continual remembrance of his own miseries—such derogatory sentiments of human nature—such scepticism concerning the existence of worth and friendship, as are expressed throughout his verses; and the morbid delight which he seemed to take in maintaining an impassable gulf, as it were, betwixt himself and society. The arguments brought to bear on the subject, are in the highest strain of Christian morality. "It is not the temper and talents of the poet," says the writer, "but the use to which he puts them, on which his happiness or misery is grounded. A powerful and unbridled imagination is the author and architect of its own disappointments. Its fascinations, its exaggerated pictures of good and evil, and the mental distress to which they

give rise, are the natural and necessary evils attending on that quick susceptibility of feeling and fancy, incident to the poetic temperament. But the Giver of all talents, while he has qualified them each with its separate and peculiar alloy, has endowed the owner with the power of purifying and refining them. As if to moderate the arrogance of genius, it is justly and wisely made requisite, that the conscious possessor must regulate and tame the fire of his fancy, and descend from the heights to which she exalts him, in order to obtain ease and tranquillity. The materials of happiness, that is, of such degree of happiness as is consistent with our present state, lie round us in profusion, but so low that the man of genius must stoop to gather them; and it is just they should do so, otherwise they would be beyond the reach of the mass of society, for whose benefit, as well as for his, Providence has created them. There is no royal and no poetical path to contentment and heart's ease; that by which they are attained is open to all classes of mankind, and lies within the most limited range of intellect. To narrow our wishes and desires within the scope of our powers of attainment; to consider our misfortunes, however peculiar in their character, as our inevitable share in the patrimony of Adam; to bridle those irritable feelings which, ungoverned, are sure to become governors; to shun that intensity of galling and self-wounding reflection which our poet has so forcibly described in his own burning language; to stoop, in short, to the realities of life; repent if we have offended, and pardon if we have been trespassed against: to look on the world less as our foe than as a doubtful and capricious friend, whose applause we ought, as far as possible, to deserve, but neither to court nor condemn; such seem the most obvious and certain means of keeping or regaining mental tranquillity." The writer then conjures the moody bard to combat with his own irritated feelings; to submit to that "discipline of the soul enjoined by religion and recommended by philosophy," as the only means of attaining the full and healthy use of his splendid faculties; and to believe that those who rejoiced in his sufferings, bore but a small proportion to those who eagerly longed to see him reconciled to himself and to the world.

A style of comment like this is somewhat unusual in the pages of criticism, where the assailant of the many generally experiences little mercy at the hands of those who live by conciliating their favour; and the subject of it must have felt the full force of the exception, in the friendly counsel and remonstrance it contained. But, alas! the disease was too deeply rooted to be eradicated by any hand, however kind and skilful.—

"——He had thought  
Too long and darkly, till his brain became  
In its own eddy, boiling and o'erwrought,  
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame."



It was more than eleven years after the above article appeared, ere it was generally known to have proceeded from the pen of Scott, and the secret was then only forced from him by the necessity of vindicating himself from an invidious charge of having delayed in any way to acknowledge the supremacy of Byron's mental powers until the grave was closed on him.\* Whether Byron himself ever knew the quarter whence the friendly criticism emanated, we have no means of ascertaining, but that he cherished a warm feeling of regard for Scott to the close of his life, we have many proofs. In the tenth canto of *Don Juan*, a poem which Scott held to display more versatility of genius than any other production since the days of Shakespeare, he takes occasion to record his partiality for his friend, in one of his capricious episodes, part of which we shall take the liberty of extracting; not only on that account, but as it also includes honourable mention of another name, much more obnoxious to him at one time than any other perhaps in the literary world, together with a generous acknowledgment of his regret for his youthful ebullition of spleen—

“Old enemies who have become new friends  
Should so continue—’tis a point of honour,  
And I know nothing which could make amends  
For a return to hatred; I would shun her  
Like garlic, however she extends  
Her hundred arms and legs, and fain outrun her.  
Old flames, new wives, become our bitterest foes—  
Converted foes should scorn to join with those.

“The lawyer and the critic but behold  
The baser sides of literature and life,  
And nought remains unseen, but much untold,  
By those who scour those double vales of strife,  
While common men grow ignorantly old.  
The lawyer's brief is like the surgeon's knife,  
Dissecting the whole inside of a question,  
And with it all the process of digestion.

“A legal broom's† a moral chimney-sweeper,  
And that's the reason he himself's so dirty;

\* The so termed “tardy acknowledgment,” which was made the occasion of the accusation, was a most eloquent and affecting tribute to the noble poet's memory and genius, which appeared in the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, on the intelligence of his death; which event took place at Missolonghi, on the 19th of April, 1824, in the 37th year of his age.

† A question might be raised, whether the poet by this figure did not mean to indicate his *suspicion* as to who the author of the attack on his juvenile poems really was. If he had had *certainly* on the subject, there is little reason to doubt he would not have confined himself to distant inuendo, or would have said nothing at all—*Stat in dubio*.

The endless soot\* bestows a tint far deeper  
 Than can be hid by altering his shirt, he  
 Retains the sable stains of the dark creeper,  
 At least some twenty-nine do out of thirty,  
 In all their habits, not so *you*, I own,  
 As Cæsar wore his robe, you wear your gown.

"And all our little feuds, at least all *mine*,  
 Dear Jeffrey, once my most redoubted foe,  
 (As far as rhyme and criticism combine  
 To make such puppets of us things below,)  
 Are over; here's a health to 'Auld Lang Syne.'  
 I do not know you, and may never know  
 Your face—but you have acted on the whole  
 Most nobly, and I own it from my soul.†

"And when I use the phrase of 'Auld Lang Syne,'  
 'Tis not address'd to you, the more's the pity  
 For me, for I would rather take my wine  
 With you than aught (save Scott) in your proud city.  
 But somehow—it may seem a schoolboy's whine,  
 And yet I seek not to be grand or witty,  
 But I am half a Scot by birth, and bred  
 A whole one, and my heart flies to my head.

"And though, as you remember, in a fit  
 Of wrath and rhyme, when juvenile and curly,  
 I railed at Scots to show my wrath and wit,  
 Which, must be owned, was sensitive and surly,  
 Yet 'tis in vain such sallies to permit,  
 They cannot quench young feelings, fresh and early;  
 I *scotch'd*, not kill'd, the Scotsman in my blood,  
 And love the land of mountain and of flood."

We shall take leave of the author of "Childe Harold," in the mean time at least, by relating a most remarkable anecdote respecting his mother, which, although communicated by Scott to the noble poet's biographer, and recorded by him in his interesting work, we feel ourselves entitled to transcribe without apology, as a story with which many besides Scott himself were long ago familiar. Mrs. Byron, it is well known, was a woman of the most vehement passions, and it was from her probably that the poet inherited that irritability which caused so much uneasiness throughout life both to others and himself. The following instance of her giving way to the emotions of the moment, is singular from the prophetic feeling which might be supposed to be

\* "Query, *suit*? Printer's devil."

† In reviewing Byron's subsequent poems, particularly the "Corsair," Mr. Jeffrey made ample amends—as far as amends *could* be made—for the strictures on the "Hours of Idleness."

expressed in it. After describing the resistless effect which the acting of the celebrated Mrs. Siddons had on her Edinburgh audiences, Scott says—"I remember Miss Gordon of Gight, in particular, harrowing the house by the desperate and wild way in which she shrieked out Mrs. Siddons' exclamation in *Isabella*, 'Oh my Byron! Oh my Byron!' A well known medical gentleman, the benevolent Dr. Alexander Wood,\* tendered his assistance; but the thick-pressed audience could not for a long time make way for the doctor to approach his patient, or the patient the physician. The remarkable circumstance was, that the lady *had not then seen* Captain Byron, who, like Sir Toby, made her conclude with 'Oh!' as she had begun with it?"

We must revert to the era of 1808. "*Marmion*," as we have said, was published early in that year; and in the course of a few weeks thereafter, and when its popularity was just at its height, the world was astounded with a fresh proof of the author's prolific and versatile talents, by the appearance of the "*Works of John Dryden*, now first collected in eighteen volumes. Illustrated with notes, historical, critical, and explanatory; and a *Life of the Author*. By Walter Scott, Esq." The work was published by Mr. Miller of London, price 9*l.* 9*s.*

This commencement of Scott's career, as a prose writer, was not unattended with its risks. Two others—the name of one of whom, at least, was enough to scare away every thought of rivalry in his own province—were before him with the subject he had chosen to discuss. Dr. Johnson, as is well known, had sketched the career of Dryden in

\* The medical gentleman referred to in the text, better remembered in Edinburgh by the name of "*Lang Sandy Wood*," was no less distinguished for his eccentricity than his benevolence. One of his peculiarities was an affected severity of disposition, which, however, was continually giving him the slip in spite of himself. The effect of Mrs. Siddons' acting upon him, we have heard described by those who witnessed it as laughable in the extreme. He could not resist the temptation of attending the theatre night after night, during the period of her engagement, and the command which she exercised over the feelings of all mankind found no exception in him. From the moment she came on the stage, indeed, to the conclusion of the piece, he was engaged in a continual and uniformly ineffectual struggle to maintain his usual appearance of sardonic indifference. We have heard an old gentleman, who was present, relate the following amusing anecdote respecting Mr. Wood's demeanour on one of these occasions. Mrs. Siddons was personating *Desdemona*, and the performance had just come to that affecting scene where *Othello* strikes her, when Mr. Wood discovered that he was actually—crying. Abashed and irritated at being beguiled into such a display of feeling, he held down his head, and was overheard thus endeavouring to reason himself into composure, as he impatiently dashed away the tears from his eyes—"All d—d nonsense this—all c—d nonsense! I'm sure I know well enough it's all nonsense! This is just the Edinburgh theatre—and I'm Sandy Wood—and she there—why she is just—just—just—that b—h Mrs. Siddons!"

his "Lives of the Poets," with a copiousness of biography rather unusual with him, and criticised his writings with a vigour and justness peculiarly his own. In addition to this fact, Scott's veneration for Johnson is known to have been so great, as to cause some surprise that he ventured into competition in the same field with him.\* After Johnson, came Mr. Malone, who, in what he called "Some Account of the Life and Writings of John Dryden," had collected, with gossiping minuteness, every fact, great or small, which had the remotest reference to that eminent individual. Something, however, yet remained to be done. The era in which Dryden flourished was a most peculiar one in British literature, and no one had yet attempted to estimate how far the age was indebted to the poet, who maintained a decided superiority over all his contemporaries, and how far the poet was influenced by the taste and manners of the age. The philosophy of the subject, in short, remained to be discussed, and to do this was the professed object of Scott's work.

The "Life of Dryden," furnishes a remarkable proof of Scott's unwearied industry and historical research. He commences with a rapid sketch of the state of English poetry, from the accession of James I. to a period subsequent to the Restoration; not only canvassing the merits of the various poets who flourished during that period, but throwing much new and valuable light on the secret state-history of those eventful times. Dryden's poetical career was so inseparably interwoven with his political connections, as to render an investigation of the latter description absolutely necessary in making up an estimate of his character,—a circumstance equally to be regretted for the sake of the dramatist and his biographer. The former, it is well known, zealously attached himself, after the Restoration, to the court party. For this he was, in the year 1668, rewarded with the appointment of poet-laureat and historiographer, with a salary of 200*l.* a-year; which, together with the profits arising from a lucrative contract which he was thereby enabled to make with the king's company of players, and other collateral advantages, brought him an income of at least 600*l.* a-year—equal in value to three times that sum at present. This comfortable provision he continued to enjoy for twenty years—in short, to the period of the revolution, when all the sunshine of his prospects vanished. The

\* Of this feeling of veneration for the "Great Moralist," Scott gave numerous proofs, both in his subsequent works, and in conversation. The following instances are told by Mr. Chambers. Being one day in company when the merits of Johnson and his imitators were discussed, he observed, in reply to a remark commendatory of some of the latter,—*"Aye, aye, many of them produce his report, but which of them carries his bullet?"* On another occasion, when in company, he took down a volume of Johnson's works, and read from it *"The Vanity of Human Wishes,"* in a tone which showed how deeply he felt the beauties, and acquiesced in the truths of that fine moral poem.

unscrupulous nature of his devotion to the fallen party, and above all, his apostatising from his own religion to that of the court of James II., had forfeited him the esteem of the ascendant whigs, many of the more influential of whom were well disposed to befriend and patronise Dryden, even in his "evil days;" and the remainder of his life, which terminated in 1700, was passed in a continual struggle with poverty—which, however, was nobly and manfully borne. It might be thought that the large amount of his former income should have enabled him to lay aside a comfortable provision against his old age, and that he did not do so seems the more curious, as he has no where been accused of personal extravagance. There is reason to suppose, however, that the expense of educating and maintaining his three sons, which he seems to have done upon a scale better suited to their maternal descent\* than his own resources, is to be assigned as the cause.

Dryden's attachment to his benefactors was no more than was natural, and, although servile, there is every reason to believe it was sincere. In fact, his gratitude seems to have been one of the chief excellences of his private character. A virtuous enthusiasm, however, has often been manifested in a very questionable cause; and whatever may be said, in other cases, in favour of a political creed such as Dryden professed, assuredly the profligate court of Charles II. can hardly be reckoned a very worthy subject of adulation. It was injudicious, therefore, in Scott, to testify so strong an anxiety as he did to justify Dryden's political predilections, a course which has frequently led him into something like panegyric in the first person, towards the unworthy objects of his author's praise.

But with the exception just stated, and somewhat too much prolixity of quotation, perhaps, explanatory of the mean and disreputable squabbles between the dramatist and his literary compeers, this biography of Dryden is in the highest degree creditable to Scott's talents. The Edinburgh Reviewers—the great literary dictators of the day—with that consistency which so frequently gives to the efforts of periodical criticism a character resembling the task of Penelope—now seemed to have forgotten all they had advanced in condemnation of "Marmion," and expressed the most lively regret that Scott should have undertaken a task so unworthy of the great genius he had formerly evinced, and which could not as they alleged, "add one sprig to the wreath which he wore as the author of those poems,

'Of which all Britain rang from side to side.'"

\* Dryden was married to lady Elizabeth Howard, eldest daughter of the Earl of Berkshire. He himself was descended from a very ancient family of Northamptonshire.

In one sense this opinion was right; but in the way in which it was meant, we conceive it to have been altogether wrong. The work gave evidence, if it did nothing else, of the author's versatility, and unremitting industry, of mind. But it did more; it presented him in a new and important character to the world, and one for which, considering what had been known of the desultory and interrupted nature of his early studies, not even his intimate friends were prepared to give him credit—that, namely, of an accomplished and erudite scholar. In addition to an intimate familiarity with the literature of Europe, ancient and modern, it displayed no common acquaintance with the early classics, together with a nice appreciation of their beauties. It exhibited, moreover, a freedom and breadth of diction, and a power of critical discrimination, that would have raised the reputation even of the Edinburgh Review itself. Altogether, considering Scott's unquestioned supremacy as a poet at the time, we hold that the production of such a work as his "Life of Dryden," gave a weight and importance to his name, which the production even of another "Lay," or another "Marmion," could not then have attached to it. It is too often the fault of successful imaginative writers (although in Mr. Southey we have one splendid exception, at least, at the present day) to confine themselves exclusively to the exercise of that *one* talent,—thus suggesting the idea of a limitation of faculties, which never fails to detract much from the author's importance in the public estimation. Scott showed that he could descend, without discredit to his fame, from the region of romance, and grapple with the things of this nether world; that he had an eye for the earth, as well as one for the clouds,—that his judgment was as strong as his fancy,—that he was capable of instructing as well as amusing mankind. Such versatility of talent, however, was, it must be allowed, somewhat rare at the above period: nor was it yet generally admitted that a poet could have any legitimate business beyond the bounds of Parnassus.

The "Life of Dryden," from the bulky and expensive form in which it was brought out, made little impression on the public at the time, nor, although a reprint was called for a few years afterwards, does it yet seem to have been very generally read. This circumstance would only have inclined us to dwell the longer upon it, with the view of making the world better acquainted with its merits and defects, did our limits permit us. This, however, cannot be; and we must confine ourselves to a quotation of the passage alluding to the dispute concerning the composition of the famous "Ode to St. Cecilia"—now better known, perhaps, by the name of "Alexander's Feast."

Of this composition, which Dryden himself afterwards asserted, and we suspect with prophetic truth, to be the best ode that ever *was*, or ever *will* be, written, one account states that he took a fortnight to write it;

another story runs, that Lord Bolingbroke happening to pay Dryden a morning visit, found him pacing up and down his room with a disordered step—his eyes inflamed—his cheek flushed; in short, with all the symptoms of his being under the influence of the *divinus afflatus*. Upon enquiring into the cause of his agitation, Dryden answered—"I have been up all night; my musical friends made me promise to write them an ode for their feast of St. Cecilia: I have been so struck with the subject which occurred to me, that I could not leave it till I had completed it; here it is, finished at one sitting." And the old bard\* thereupon showed him the ode freshly penned. "These different accounts," observes Scott, "are not so contradictory as they may at first sight appear. It is possible that Dryden may have completed, at one sitting, the whole ode, and yet have employed a fortnight, or much more, in the corrections. There is strong internal evidence to show that the poem was, speaking with reference to its general structure, wrought off at once. A halt, or pause, even of a day, would perhaps have injured that continuous flow of poetical language and description, which argues the whole scene to have arisen at once upon the author's imagination. It seems possible, more especially in lyrical poetry, to discover where the author has paused for any length of time; for the union of the parts is rarely so perfect as not to show a different strain of thought and feeling. There may be something fanciful, however, in this reasoning, which I therefore abandon to the reader's mercy, only begging him to observe, that we have no mode of estimating the exertions of a quality so capricious as a poetic imagination; so that it is very possible that the ode to St. Cecilia may have been the work of twenty-four hours, whilst corrections and emendations, perhaps of no very great consequence, occupied the author as many days."

The reader will perceive at a glance the justness and acuteness of these remarks. They demonstrate, too, the advantage of a poet being a poet's biographer.

In the same year (1808) Scott was engaged by Mr. Murray, bookseller, London, to arrange for publication the posthumous productions of the celebrated artist and antiquary, Joseph Strutt, Esq. Amongst these was an unfinished romance, entitled, "Queen Hoo Hall," the scene of which was laid in the reign of Henry VI., and the work intended to illustrate the manners, customs, and language of the people of England during that period. Scott deemed it his duty, in his capacity of editor, to finish the work, and accordingly added a concluding chapter. This was his second, or at most, his third attempt at fictitious prose composi-

\* He was then in his 66th year. He was born on 9th August, 1631; and died May 1st, 1700.

tion, and gave him hope, he says, that he might in time become free of the craft of romance writing. The work, however, was not very successful—a fact that may perhaps be accounted for by the too liberal display of antiquarian knowledge by the original projector of it.

In the year succeeding the publication of the “Life of Dryden,” that is, in 1809, there appeared the “State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler,” with a Memoir of his Life, and Historical Notes, in two quarto volumes. This publication was the joint production of Arthur Clifford, Esq. and the subject of our narrative. The part contributed by the latter were the Memoir and Notes.

Sadler was Secretary of State to Henry VIII., and amongst his other duties, was frequently employed by that prince as ambassador to the Scottish court to manage the various amicable negotiations set on foot, almost always unsuccessfully, between the two kingdoms. The letters and other documents relating to these missions, one of which was with a view to negotiate a marriage, by betrothment, between Prince Edward of England and the infant Mary, Queen of Scots, form the principal and much the most interesting part of the work; and it would be difficult to speak too highly of the curious nature of the greater part of the contents. But in the papers themselves lies the chief value of the publication. It might have been expected, from Scott’s almost universal knowledge of Scottish history, that with such a store of rich materials in his hands, applicable to one of its most interesting periods, he would have given to the world an essay replete at once with the most vivid interest, and of the last importance in a historical point of view. Considerable disappointment, however, must needs be felt in these respects, upon an examination of the work. Scott has suffered his antiquarian predilections to obscure his sense of the dignity and importance of history; and although he brings forward much that is curious with his usual ingenuity, he adds little to the value of the original documents. There is palpable evidence, moreover, of the work having been huddled up either with great haste or great negligence. Still it is one which will richly repay an examination; and in fact, without a perusal of it, it is impossible for any one to form a clear unbiassed opinion of the state policy and internal transactions of the two nations during the long period—embracing nearly half a century—over which the circumstances treated of are scattered. The papers relating to the unfortunate Queen Mary, of whom Sadler, after her ill-advised flight to England, was one of the “keepers,” and also one of the commissioners appointed to sit in judgment on her—as he had curiously enough, more than forty years before, done his utmost to have her selected as his sovereign—are particularly interesting. Sadler seems to have exerted himself most creditably to mitigate the rigorous severity of his royal charge’s captivity in many



respects; and considering his acknowledged honesty of narrative, together with his zealous devotion to his mistress, Elizabeth, we attribute in a great measure the general diversity of opinion which even yet prevails respecting the relative character and conduct of the two queens, to a want of acquaintance with the posthumous testimony of this illustrious statesman.

In the same year (1809) Scott lent his assistance in editing a work similar in character to that of Sadler's papers, namely, Lord Somers' important collection of tracts, which were afterwards published in thirteen volumes royal quarto. But it would be a task much beyond the limits of this memoir, to enter into an exposition of the character of these invaluable historical documents.

We have now to notice the next great effort of Scott's muse, "*The Lady of the Lake*," which appeared early in 1810; and we reckon it proper again to allow him to introduce his own production as nearly as possible in his own words:—\*

"The poems of Ossian," says he, "had, by their popularity, sufficiently shown, that if writings on Highland subjects were qualified to interest the reader, mere national prejudices were, in the present day, very unlikely to interfere with their success. I had also read a great deal, and heard more, concerning that romantic country, where I was in the habit of spending some time every autumn; and the scenery of Loch Katrine was connected with the recollection of many a dear friend, and merry expedition of former days. This poem, the action of which lay among scenes so beautiful, and so deeply imprinted on my recollection, was a labour of love, and it was no less so to recall the manners and incidents introduced.

"I may now confess, however, that the employment, though attended with great pleasure, was not without its doubts and anxieties. A lady to whom I was nearly related, and with whom I lived, during her whole life, on the most brotherly terms of affection, was residing with me at the time when the work was in progress, and used to ask me what I could possibly do to rise so early in the morning. At last I told her the subject of my meditations; and I can never forget the anxiety and affection expressed in her reply. 'Do not be so rash,' she said, 'my dearest cousin. You are already popular—more so, perhaps, than you yourself will believe, or than even I, or other partial friends, can fairly allow to your merit. You stand high—do not rashly attempt to climb higher, and incur the risk of a fall; for, depend upon it, a favourite will not even be permitted to stumble with impunity.' I replied to this affectionate expostulation in the words of Montrose,—

\* Introduction to "*Lady of the Lake*," written in 1830.

'He either fears his fate too much,  
Or his deserts are small,  
Who dares not put it to the touch,  
To gain or lose it all.'

'If I fail,' I said, for the dialogue is strong in my recollection, 'it is a sign that I ought never to have succeeded, and I will write prose for life; you shall see no change in my temper, nor will I eat a single meal the worse. But if I succeed,—

'Up with the bonnie blue bonnet,  
The dirk and the feather and a' !'

"Afterwards, I showed my affectionate and anxious critic the first canto of my poem, which reconciled her to my imprudence. \* \* \*

"I remember that about the same time, a friend started in to 'heeze up my hope,' like the minstrel in the old song. He was bred a farmer, but a man of powerful understanding, natural good taste, and warm poetical feeling, perfectly competent to supply the wants of an imperfect or irregular education. He was a passionate admirer of field sports, which we often pursued together.\* As this friend happened to dine with me at Ashiesteel one day, I took the opportunity of reading to him the first canto of 'The Lady of the Lake,' in order to ascertain the effect the poem was likely to produce upon a person who was but too favourable a representation of readers at large. His reception of my recitation, or prelection, was rather singular. He placed his hand across his brow, and listened with great attention through the whole account of the stag-hunt, till the dogs threw themselves into the lake to follow their master, who embarks with Ellen Douglas. He then started up with a sudden exclamation, struck his hand on the table, and declared in a voice of censure calculated for the occasion, that the dogs must have been totally ruined by being permitted to take the water after such a severe chase.† I own I was much encouraged by the species of

\* We believe the individual here mentioned was Mr. Archibald Park, brother of the celebrated traveller.

† A curious instance of a nature similar to this—the power, namely, of an author over the imagination of his readers, was lately told, as an authenticated fact, by the learned Sir John Herschel, in his opening address to the subscribers of the Windsor and Eton Public Library, of which that eminent man is president. The blacksmith of a village in Northamptonshire (we think) had got hold of Richardson's novel of "Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded," and used to read it aloud in the long summer evenings seated on his anvil, and never failed to have a large and attentive audience. It is a pretty long winded book; but their patience was fully a match for the author's prolixity, and they fairly listened through it all. At length, when the happy turn of fortune arrived which brings the hero and heroine together, and sets them living long and happily, the congregation

reverie which had possessed so zealous a follower of the sports of the ancient Nimrod, who had been completely surprised out of all doubts of the reality of the tale." The same friend, however, made a discovery, he says, which rather annoyed him—namely, the identity of King James with the Knight of Snowdown; and he afterwards endeavoured to efface, as far as possible, all traces by which the secret might be detected by others.

Scott says, he took uncommon pains to verify the accuracy of the local circumstances of this story, and even went on a special mission into Perthshire, to see whether King James could actually have ridden from the banks of Loch Vennachar to Stirling Castle within the time supposed in the poem, and had the pleasure to satisfy himself that it was quite practicable.

The poem was finished in the latter end of 1809, but its appearance was delayed till June in the following year. Its success, says the author himself, was so extraordinary, as to induce him for the moment to conclude that he had at last "fixed a nail in the proverbially inconstant wheel of fortune, whose stability in behalf of an individual who had so boldly courted her favour for three successive times, had not as yet been shaken." Scott seems, at the same time, to have thought it necessary—a proceeding which every one else, we believe, reckoned a very unnecessary one—to enter into a justification of himself, for again intruding his compositions on the public, besides running the risk of incurring the captious displeasure of the critics, and through their means losing his already pre-eminent popularity. On the latter subject, however, he had long before made up his mind. "If a man is determined," says he, in his own peculiar style of facetious humour, "to make a noise in the world, he is as sure to encounter abuse and ridicule, as he who gallops furiously through a village must reckon on being followed by the curs in full cry. Experienced persons know, that in stretching to flog the latter, the rider is very apt to catch a bad fall, nor is an attempt to chastise a malignant critic attended with less danger to the author. On this principle, I let parody, burlesque, and squibs, find their own level; and while the latter hissed most fiercely, I was cautious never to catch them up as schoolboys do, to throw them back against the naughty boy who fired them off; wisely remembering, that they are in such cases apt to explode in the handling." Scott, however, had little now to fear from the critics. The judgment, or fancy, if any please to term it so, of the public, was so unanimous in his fa-

was so delighted that they raised a great shout; and having got hold of the keys of the church, actually rung a merry peal on the parish bells, to testify their joy at the event.

vour, that those disposed to carp at him were compelled to yield to the current. Even those who had previously laboured most anxiously, although no doubt with the most friendly intention, to discover and expose the errors and defects of his genius—like the philosophers who, while the other inhabitants of the earth content themselves with delightedly and thankfully enjoying the blessed light of the noonday sun, employ themselves anxiously in pointing out the specks and spots that dim his surface—became now the loudest in his approbation. As O'Connell once said of himself, in reference to an extraordinary sudden change in his opinions on a certain political question, "they came to the task of panegyric with all the fervour of converted renegades."

Like its two great predecessors, the "*Lady of the Lake*" is divided into six cantos, the time of action in each occupying the space of a day. The scene is laid chiefly in the vicinity of Loch Katrine, in the Western Highlands of Perthshire, where there is commingled more of the beautiful and the sublime than is to be found in any locality, perhaps, within the shores of the "land of the mountain and the flood." In this respect it was incalculably better suited than the scenery in which the plots of his previous poems were laid, for the display of the author's unrivalled powers of description; and there is an individuality, a minuteness, yet freedom and breadth of portraiture throughout, which we believe is nowhere to be paralleled, unless upon the canvass. And this holds good, no less with respect to the living characters he introduces, than with the rocks, ravines, and torrents which he in a manner exhibits to the eye. It seems to be generally thought that this is the highest finished and most equally sustained of all Scott's larger poems; and although the fascinating novelty of the tartans and the heather, the mountain and the lake, which no doubt contributed powerfully to its unprecedented popularity at the time of publication, be long since past away, we are not sure if it will not continue to be the most universally read and admired by posterity.

We have seen that Scott was not inclined to confine his literary labours merely to the regions of poetry and romance; and, in fact, he himself somewhere says, that about the period of the publication of the "*Lady of the Lake*," he "agnized a natural and prompt alacrity" to the duties of "Editor and Commentator," and felt strongly tempted to take them up to the exclusion of more weighty and serious occupations. About this time, indeed, he was in the habit of contributing to the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly Reviews*. Amongst his articles in the former, was an elaborate criticism on the *Life and Writings of Chaucer*; also reviews of *Godwin's* and *Maturin's* works, &c. For the last twenty years of his life, however, it is said he seldom saw this periodical; but he became a regular contributor to the *Quarterly* after the accession of

his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, to the editorship of that work in 1824. But the chief cause of this temporary disposition to abandon the flowery but perilous paths of fiction, arose from the following circumstance. Our readers will recollect our account of Scott's early acquaintance with Messrs. James and John Ballantyne, whom we left at Kelso, the former engaged as a printer and editor of the *Kelso Mail*, while the latter acted as his clerk. Shortly after the publication of the second edition of the "*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*," in 1803, the two brothers migrated to Edinburgh, where they set up a printing establishment. This step they took, we believe, at the recommendation of their early friend, if not mainly assisted by him with the means of commencing business. At least we understand he had a sort of silent partnership along with them from the first, although no regular contract of copartnery was ever executed. As the establishment was commenced on a somewhat extensive scale, considerable capital was necessary to carry it on, and this was raised, according to what we can learn, chiefly by means of cash credit with the banks, and drawing bills on each other. This appears to have been the period of Scott's first acquaintance with that deceptive system of conducting business, the consequences of which he ultimately experienced to so lamentable a degree, and which we will afterwards have to speak of more at large. The firm of Ballantyne and Co., however, continued to prosper; and about the year 1808 or 1809, a new concern was started, by John Ballantyne commencing business as a bookseller, with Scott as a partner. This new partnership was on the same loose and hollow basis as the other, no contract being drawn up betwixt the parties, and the capital being raised by a similar process. From all we can learn, we are led to surmise that the new copartnery was projected chiefly upon the credit of Scott's literary abilities. He was then in the zenith of his fame; immense sums had been given by the other publishers for his works; still more splendid offers were no doubt held out to him for the further productions of his genius; and it seems far from improbable that the idea of engrossing the profits at once of author, printer and publisher, suggested itself, or was suggested by others, to his mind. Accordingly, the first work published by John Ballantyne and Co. being also printed by James Ballantyne and Co., was the "*Lady of the Lake*," for the authorship of which we have been informed the nominal sum of 3000*l.* was placed to Scott's credit in the books of the former. His subsequent poems, the "*Vision of Don Roderick*," "*Rokeby*," "*Lord of the Isles*," &c., were published by the same firm. A new work, upon rather a novel plan, was also started by them, being a general historical and critical compendium of the politics and literature for the year, under the title of the "*Annual Register*." The editorship of this new undertaking was entrusted

to Mr. Southey; but besides contributing largely, Scott had the principal local management of it. The first volume, referring to the year 1808, was published early in 1810, in two parts. Scott's contributions to this part were disapproved by Mr. Southey, and he very patiently sat down and re-wrote the whole of the matter. The work was remarkably popular, and continued so during the period of its existence, but was ultimately stopped in 1817.

This publishing scheme prospered amazingly, and would have proved a highly lucrative one to the parties, had it been conducted either with care or economy; but the system of extravagance and overtrading that was pursued was more than a match for whatever prosperity might attend it, and it was found prudent to dissolve the copartnery in 1813.\* Scott is said to have drawn huge sums in name of copyright value for his works, which were paid in bills. These, of course, had again to be met when they became due, with other bills, and the affairs of the parties at length got into a state of entanglement and confusion, which nothing but the skill and experience of a man of business were able to unravel. Ultimately, however, the debts of the firm were all, in some manner or other, paid, and the copyrights were resumed by Scott. Mr. Ballantyne had, during the continuance of the firm, projected another large work, to be entitled *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library*, for which Scott wrote a number of biographical and critical sketches, as prefaces to the collection. This work was carried on for some time after Mr. Ballantyne's death, by Messrs. Hurst and Robinson of London, but was latterly suspended; and the pieces were finally published in a collected form, in the year 1827. Amongst these sketches were Memoirs of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Cumberland, Goldsmith, Johnson, Sterne, Mackenzie, Walpole, and various other celebrated characters. They are all written in a pleasing and animated, but somewhat hasty and superficial manner. Another small hebdomadal publication, after the manner of Addison's "Spectator," was likewise started by Mr. Ballantyne in January, 1817, called the "Sale-Room," to which Scott contributed a few essays; but it was stopped in July, the same year, for want of support. Mr. Ballantyne, who subsequently became an auctioneer, died in 1821.

In the same year in which appeared the "Lady of the Lake," Scott arranged and edited the poems of Miss Anna Seward, in three volumes, to which was prefixed an elegant memoir of her life. This task was undertaken at the particular desire of the authoress herself, betwixt whom and Scott a friendship of the strongest kind subsisted. That

\* It was immediately upon the dissolution of this concern that Scott's more lasting connection with Mr. Constable commenced.

amiable and talented woman expired on the 23d March, 1809, in the sixty-second year of her age; and the letter bequeathing to her friend the grateful but melancholy duty he so ably executed, was penned on her death-bed, and in fact within a few days of her decease. The great bulk of her correspondence, however, was left to Mr. Constable, who afterwards published it.

We had intended to conclude this chapter with a notice of Scott's next poetical work, the "Vision of Don Roderick," but as the date of the publication of that poem may be regarded as the commencement of a distinct epoch both in the poet's literary character and situation in life, we think it will be a more suitable distribution of our matter to place it under a new head.

## CHAPTER V.

FROM THE PUBLICATION OF "VISION OF DON RODERICK" IN 1811, TO  
THE PUBLICATION OF "WAVERLEY" IN 1814.—MIDDLE LIFE.

OUR narrative must now assume a very different character from what it has hitherto borne. Up to the period at which we have arrived, our task has been the pleasing one of tracing Scott's triumphant ascent from the base to the summit of Parnassus, and contemplating the various achievements by which he vindicated his continued right to the poetic sceptre. But the Parnassian sovereignty is a perilous one, and of the successive occupants of that aerial throne it may be said, by a trifling alteration of the words of Goldsmith,

"A breath unmakes them as a breath doth make."

One of the changes incidental to this peculiar system of *popular* elevation Scott was now about to experience, and as we have attended him during the brilliant period of his success, so we must also follow him in his descent from his place of eminence. In most cases, this would be any thing but a cheering duty, but in the present instance it is more like attending a conqueror who gracefully yields up to a newer and more favoured rival a sceptre, held but by popular toleration, to take possession of a more extensive dominion, founded by himself, and where his supremacy was doomed, it would seem, to be permanent.

Scott still held, however, undisputed possession of the laurel crown, when, in the year 1811, he brought out his "Vision of Don Roderick." This poem was of an entirely different character, both as to subject and versification, from any of his previous productions. It is in the Spenserian measure, and professes to give a sort of shadowy historical outline of the state of Spain, from a period previous to the invasion of the Moors, to the close of the peninsular war in 1810. Its main object, however, is to commemorate the successes of British arms during the latter, and the achievements of Wellington, Beresford and other commanders in the campaign. The poem is penned in a high-flown strain of sentiment throughout; and although there is undoubtedly much fine poetry and many lofty conceptions in it, the work was more adapted to the public enthusiasm of the moment, than the cool judgment of poste-



city.\* The author himself, if we are not much mistaken, afterwards adopted a similar opinion with ourselves, respecting this poem: and we are the more inclined to suppose this from the fact, that in his recently penned prefaces to his poems, he makes no mention whatever of the "Vision of Don Roderick," although he alludes at considerable length to "Rokeby" and others that followed it, all of which were received with much greater disfavour by the public.

Several smaller poems were appended to the larger one when it was published; and, although the sale of the volume was nothing like that of its predecessors, and its after-popularity still less so, it was on the whole well received at the time, and reached a second edition in a few weeks. We must not here omit to state, that Scott devoted the profits of the volume to the relief of the then suffering inhabitants of Portugal.

Two years elapsed after the publication of the above poem ere its author again obtruded his muse on the public attention, during which period he was engaged in certain domestic arrangements to which we will have immediately to refer. His next effort appeared in 1813, under the name of "Rokeby," being a tale of the civil war in England, in which he attempted to interest the feelings of his readers in the transactions of that period.

"If subject and scenery," says the author, "could have influenced the fate of a poem, that of 'Rokeby' should have been eminently distinguished; for the grounds belonged to a dear friend, with whom I had lived in habits of intimacy for many years, and the place itself united the romantic beauties of the wilds of Scotland with the rich and smiling aspect of the southern portion of the island. But the Cavaliers and Roundheads whom I attempted to summon up to tenant this beautiful region, had for the public neither the novelty nor the peculiar interest of the primitive Highlanders. This, perhaps, was scarcely to be expected, considering that the general mind sympathises readily and at once with the stamp which Nature herself has affixed upon the manners of a peo-

\* His allusions to Bonaparte especially are, to use a popular Scottish phrase, "out of all character."—For example—

"From a rude isle his *ruder lineage* came:  
The spark that, from a suburb hovel's hearth  
Ascending, wraps some capital in flame,  
Hath not a *meaner or more sordid birth*;  
And for the soul that bade him waste the earth—  
The sable land-flood from some swamp obscure,  
That poisons the glad husband-field with dearth,  
And by destruction bids its fame endure,  
Hath not a source more *sullen, stagnant, and impure!*"

† Rokeby Hall, Northumberland.

ple living in a simple and patriarchal state; whereas it has more difficulty in understanding or interesting itself in manners which are founded upon those peculiar habits of thinking which are produced by the progress of society."

This is unquestionably true, and the subject, it must be confessed, was an unfortunate one, considering the peculiar bent of the author's genius. His muse was the muse of romance, and his attempt, accordingly, to throw her spells over the dry matter-of-fact details of comparatively recent history, was, as might have been anticipated, a failure. But there were many more reasons for his want of success in this poem besides his unhappy selection of a plot. The public were beginning to weary of the sort of hand-gallop style of versification in which it was written. The uncommon popularity of his three great poems, and the apparent facility of the measure, had raised up a host of copyists, of whom it is almost needless to say, that the majority produced rather burlesques than imitations of the original. People had, accordingly, become nauseated with this eternal jingling in the same key, and the *school*, as it had begun to be termed, was naturally falling into disrepute. This feeling of disgust was soon converted into that of ridicule by the fry of parodists, who are ever on the watch for opportunities of putting the public in good humour with themselves at the expense of their literary rivals. A clever satirical burlesque, under the title of "Jokeby," appeared, which told severely against the original poem, and was, we believe, much the more popular of the two.\* But there was a still more formidable cause for the discomfiture of "Rokeby" than either of those yet mentioned. Byron had taken the field with his "Childe Harold," and all eyes were now turned towards this newly-arisen meteor, with feelings of wonder, approaching almost to awe. Scott at once felt and confessed the blighting influence of this rival luminary. "I was astonished," he says, "at the power evinced by that work, which neither the 'Hours of Idleness,' nor the 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers' had prepared me to expect from its author. There was a depth in his thought, an eager abundance in his diction, which argued full confidence in the inexhaustible resources of which he felt himself possessed; and there was some appearance of that labour of the file, which indicates that the author is

\* Scott displayed his habitual good temper and equanimity on the publication of this clever production, and laughed at it as heartily as any one. Soon after its appearance, a Galashiels manufacturer, who knew Scott, carried the celebrated publisher, Mr. Tegg, to Abbotsford, and introduced him as the author of "Jokeby," Mr. T. having jocularly stated himself to be so. "The more jokes the better," was Scott's reply, setting a chair for his supposed parodist; and immediately entered into conversation on general topics with his usual urbanity.

convinced of the necessity of doing every justice to his work, that it may pass warrant." \* \* \* "There would have been little wisdom in measuring my force with so formidable an antagonist, and I was as likely to tire of playing second fiddle, as my audience of hearing me." It must, in addition to all this, be remembered that Scott had now reached that time of life, when the poetic feeling begins to cool, and the human heart ceases to own those emotions which constitute so principal an ingredient in the temperament of the muse's successful votaries.

Upon the whole, "Rokeby" was generally reckoned, in jockey phrase, a decided break down, (although Scott tells us that 1500 copies were sold at the time,) and the star of its author began from that hour to "pale its ineffectual ray" in the public estimation, although perhaps not more from its own declination, than the ascendant brilliancy of its competitor. But he had too long held possession of the field to be driven from it by a single discomfiture. He retreated to his favourite Highlands, planted his foot once more on the heather, and although conscious that he was striving against wind and tide, he resolved to make a last and vigorous effort, to redeem the tarnished honour of the muse of Caledonia. The subject which he selected for this purpose—the achievements of Bruce—was one calculated, in the last degree, to catch the feelings and rouse the patriotic ardour of his countrymen; and had the poem founded on it, instead of the "Vision of Don Roderick," followed the "Lady of the Lake" in due course, we question if it would not, although no doubt undeservedly, have commanded a more extensive *temporary* popularity than any of its predecessors. Be that as it may, the "Lord of the Isles," (which appeared in 1814,) although, as the author says, concluded unwillingly and in haste, and under the painful feeling of one who has a task to perform, rather than with the ardour of one who endeavours to perform that task well, enjoyed a sale of 15,000 copies, and enabled Scott, to use his own language, to retreat from the field with the honours of war.

In the same year, Scott published anonymously, a little metrical romantic tale of the Italian school of composition, entitled the "Bridal of Triermain." This was done, he says, at the express request of his friend, William Erskine, (Lord Kinneder,) but on the condition that the latter would make no effort to disown the authorship, should it ever be laid to his charge. Scott accordingly contrived to throw into the poem several passages in keeping with his friend's feeling and manner, and as the latter professed a taste for poetical composition, the production was at once attributed to him. In this manner two large editions were sold off, but upon a third being called for, Erskine declined to carry

on the deception any longer, and Scott's name was accordingly prefixed.\*

We ought now, in conformity with the chronological arrangement which we consider so imperative in a work of biography to pursue, and which we have endeavoured to observe hitherto, to bid adieu to Scott in his poetical character for a while; but as none of the subsequent poems to which he gave birth can be said to have made, comparatively speaking, any deep impression on the public, and as we are unwilling to have the consecutiveness of our notices of his prose works interrupted by the necessity of turning aside to advert to the minor efforts of his muse, we shall here enumerate the latter in as summary a manner as propriety seems to us to admit of.

In 1815, immediately after the battle of Waterloo, Scott, at the suggestion of his publisher, Mr. Constable, passed over to the continent, and visited the scene of that memorable engagement. The result of this journey was a lively prose volume, to be afterwards noticed, together with a poem of some length, in commemoration of the great event, both of which came out the same year. The latter production, entitled "*Waterloo*," has always been reckoned the most unworthy of all Scott's poetical efforts, nor did it enjoy the slightest popularity, even when men's minds were most disposed to receive any attempt to celebrate that splendid triumph of British valour with favour, if not with avidity. Probably the public expected too much; but without joining in the unqualified condemnation generally passed upon it, we must confess that the poem is far from being worthy of the subject. Nor is this at all surprising, as we understand it was written at the several stages where the author halted during his journey, whence the manuscript was despatched to Edinburgh, and the whole published with scarcely a word of emendation.

In the following year, 1816, he published another small unacknowledged poem, called "*Harold the Dauntless*," in the style of the rude minstrel, or Scald. It encountered, he says, rather an odd fate. "My ingenious friend, Mr. James Hogg, had published about the same time, a work called the '*Poetic Mirror*,' containing imitations of the principal living poets. There was in it a very good imitation of my own style, which bore such a resemblance to '*Harold the Dauntless*,' that there

\* Mr. Chambers states, upon respectable authority, that the reason of Scott's publishing this poem and "*Harold the Dauntless*" anonymously, was in consequence of the proprietor of the scene of "*Rokeby*" jocularly twitting him with the observation, "that his books sold merely because his name was put upon the title page,"—a remark which Scott felt not a little indignant at, and avowed he would put to the proof forthwith. This story seems rather inconsistent with Scott's own account of the matter.

was no discovering the original from the imitation; and I believe that many who took the trouble of thinking on the subject, were rather of opinion that my ingenious friend\* was the true, and not the fictitious Simon Pure."

Respecting the character of the last-named poem and the "Bridal of Triermain"—which both belong to the same "order" of poetry—we need say but little. They contain most of the imperfections, and not a few of the best traits of their author's genius. They seem each to have been dashed off, as it were, at a sitting, and from this reason bear such indubitable marks of their parentage, that it seems surprising, at this time of day, how any doubt could ever have been entertained on that subject. The number of fictitious Simon Pures, as Scott says, that were then abroad, may however account for the mistake.

From 1816 to 1820, Scott did not present himself again to the world in his poetical character. In the latter year, he published a small volume of fugitive pieces, under the capricious title of "Trivial Poems and Triplets, by P. Carey," of which it is unnecessary further to speak.

In 1822, appeared a dramatic sketch from his pen, called "Halidon Hill." It was not intended for the stage, but we are rather surprised that no attempt has ever been made to bring it out as a drama. It is perhaps rather brief for representation, but the incidents are decidedly national, and the characters drawn with fervour and animation. One of the principal personages brought forward is an ancestor of the poet, of the Swinton family. The poem was well received at the time of its appearance, and it is said that he received 2000*l.* from his publisher, Mr. Constable, for the copyright.

The remaining productions of Scott's muse that fall to be mentioned, seemed little, if at all known. These are "M'Duff's Cross," a short dramatic poem, which was written for a Miscellany, published in 1823, by Mrs. Joanna Baillie: "The Doom of Devorgoil," and "Auchindrane or the Ayrshire Tragedy"—productions of a similar character with the former, but of much greater length, which were published in one volume in 1830.

Having now concluded our notice of the poetical productions of our author, it may be expected that we should attempt an estimate of his powers in that department, both individually and comparatively. This would be a task at once easy and pleasing to us: but besides our having already dwelt at considerable length in most of the productions on which his reputation was founded, such an essay, to be complete or satisfactory,

\* Hogg states, in the memoir of his life, that the author of this perfect imitation was not himself, but his friend Mr. Thomas Pringle; a statement which Scott seems to have overlooked.

would necessarily lead us into a field of discussion far too extensive for the space that is now left to us for the consideration of his other works. Instead, therefore, of entering on so wide a topic ourselves, at this advanced stage of our memoir, we will substitute a few sentences on the subject from a criticism which appeared in the "Edinburgh Review" upon the publication of the "Lady of the Lake," which seems to us, on the whole, to contain, in the most concise form, the justest estimate of Scott's genius, as a poet, which has yet fallen under our notice.\*

"In the choice of his subjects," says the critic, "he does not attempt to interest merely by fine observation or pathetic sentiment, but takes the assistance of a story, and enlists the reader's curiosity among his motives for attention. Then his characters are all selected from the most common *dramatis personæ* of poetry. Kings, warriors, knights, outlaws, nuns, minstrels, secluded damsels, wizards, and true lovers. He never ventures to carry us into the cottage of the peasant, like Crabbe, or Cowper; nor into the bosom of domestic privacy, like Campbell; nor among creatures of the imagination, like Southey or Darwin. Such personages, we readily admit, are not in themselves so interesting or striking as those to whom Mr. Scott has devoted himself; but they are far less familiar in poetry, and are therefore more likely, perhaps, to engage the attention of those to whom poetry is familiar. In the management of the passions, again, Mr. Scott appears to have pursued the same popular and comparatively easy course. He has raised all the most familiar and poetical emotions, by the most obvious aggravations, and in the most compendious and judicious way. He has dazzled the reader with splendour, and even warmed him with the transient heat of various affections; but he has no where fairly kindled him with enthusiasm,† or melted him into tenderness. Writing for the world at large, he has wisely abstained from attempting to raise any passion to a height to which worldly people could not be transported; and contented himself with giving his reader the chance of feeling as a brave, kind, and affectionate gentleman should often feel in the ordinary course of his existence, without trying to breathe into him either that lofty enthusiasm which disdains the ordinary business and amusements of life, or that quiet and deep sensibility which unfits for all its pursuits. With regard to diction and imagery, too, it is quite obvious, that Mr. Scott has not aimed at writing either a pure or a very consistent style. He

\* *Vide* Edinburgh Review, August, 1810.

† We entirely disagree with the critic on this point; that is to say, if "enthusiasm" means, as we take it to mean, a *powerful excitement of the imagination*. In this sense, there are many of Scott's chivalric descriptions that are quite unrivaled in modern poetry for their power of hurrying away the fancy and the feelings of his readers.

seems to have been anxious only to strike, and to be easily and universally understood; and, for this purpose, to have culled the most glittering and conspicuous expressions of the most popular authors, and to have interwoven them in splendid confusion with his own nervous diction and irregular versification. Indifferent whether he coins or borrows, and drawing with equal freedom on his memory and imagination, he goes boldly forward in full reliance on a never-failing abundance; and dazzles, with his richness and variety, even those who are most apt to be offended with his glare and irregularity. There is nothing in Mr. Scott of the severe and majestic style of Milton, or of the terse and fine composition of Pope, or of the elaborate elegance and melody of Campbell, or even of the flowing and redundant diction of Southey. But there is a medley of bright images and glowing words, set carelessly and loosely together—a diction, tinged successively with the careless richness of Shakspeare, the harshness and antique simplicity of the old romances, the homeliness of vulgar ballads and anecdotes, and the sentimental glitter of the most modern poetry,—passing from the borders of the ludicrous to those of the sublime,—alternately minute and energetic—sometimes artificial and frequently negligent—but always full of spirit and vivacity,—abounding in images that are striking, at first sight, to minds of every contexture—and never expressing a sentiment which it can cost the most ordinary reader any exertion to comprehend.”

We must now turn, for a while, from Scott's literary career, to attend to the changes which time and circumstances were effecting in his station in life, as well as in his habits and occupations; and in doing so must revert to the period of 1811.

Like all true poets, Scott's habits of feeling were of a decidedly rural character; but with this love of the scenes of nature were mingled other feelings of a less imaginative description. It is evident, from the whole tenor of his life, that if he ever allowed any one passion completely to engross his mind, it was the ambition of attaining the status of a country gentleman, and maintaining the hospitable establishment of a wealthy landed proprietor. And this fact leads us to remark an extraordinary inconsistency in his character. In his habits, his demeanour, and his desires, he was decidedly *aristocratic*. He was proud of his ancestry; he loved the exercise of the duties pertaining to his official situation in the county; he uniformly affected the society of those above his own rank in life; and, as we have already said, he eagerly longed to be enrolled amongst those who are more emphatically denominated the “Lords of the creation.” Moreover, he had attached himself, in a political sense, to that party which has always been considered as more peculiarly the aristocratic one in the nation. On the other hand, if we examine his prose writings, it will be found that a spirit of what is termed

"Liberalism" predominates throughout. He almost uniformly takes the side of the weak against the strong, and omits no opportunity of ridiculing, or *showing up*, the weak "insolence of office," or holding out the abuse of power, and the empty vanity of mere rank to our contempt and detestation. In practice, a devoted worshipper of kings, he has mercilessly burlesqued monarchy in his character of James, and exposed the licentiousness of princes in the person of Charles. Proud of sitting at the tables of dukes and earls, he has drawn with unsparing truth the reckless ambition of Leicester, the profligacy of Buckingham, and the brutal mirth of Lauderdale, over the sufferings of his victims. Jealous of his dignity as a magistrate, he has libeled the whole bench of country justices in the character of the empty, overbearing, blustering fool, Sir Robert Hazlewood of Hazlewood, Baronet; and in his portraiture of Sir Arthur Wardour, he gives us a racy comment on the foolish passion of "family pride." Again, it will be found that almost all his best—that is to say, his most virtuous and amiable specimens of human character, are taken from the lower classes of society. Where shall we find so fine a picture of filial and sisterly affection, and true moral firmness, as in his portraiture of Jeanie Deans—of real generosity and honest worth, as in that of Dandie Dinmont—of humble affection and devoted gratitude, as in Dominie Sampson—or high souled religious principle, as in Mause Headrigg, or the other poor blind widow, sitting by the wayside to warn the people of God from the persecutors' fangs? If it be true what Byron said of him, "that he was the *poet* of princes," it is as unquestionably true that he was the *chronicler* of the people, and may be said, in this respect, to be in prose what Burns was in rhyme.

All this seems odd enough, but it only demonstrates how far early training will go to supersede a man's natural character. Scott's heart was evidently with the great mass of society; but he had been educated in strict habits of reverence for rank and office; and therefore it is that, while we find him, in his personal demeanour and *habits* of acting, seemingly yielding an almost subservient deference to the conventional distinctions of society, and striving to push forward as far, as he says, "abreast of it" as possible, the whole spirit of his genius breathes the emphatic language of his brother bard,—

"The rank is but the guinea-stamp,  
The man's the gowd for a' that."

During the last few years of his residence at Ashiesteel, Scott rented the small farm attached to his residence, upon which, with the usual success of all unskilled interlopers in husbandry, he had the pleasure of experimentalising as the sole return for a considerable outlay of money.



Many people are surprised at this uniform failure of the labours of "gentlemen farmers;" but that they are so only shows how ignorant they are of the subject. Of all earthly occupations, (if we may risk the imputation of a pun,) there is none which requires a longer or more severe apprenticeship than that of the agriculturist. It is one, in short, which can only be learned by experience, and as all practical husbandmen well know, the instruction to be acquired from all the books that ever were penned on the subject is of little efficiency in directing the operations of the field. Hints may be got for the economical management of household details, and other concerns of an agricultural establishment, but in all that relates to the main operations of the farmer, the head and hand of practical experience alone are the guides to be depended on. It is the almost inevitable consequence, therefore, with those who take up the occupation, depending for success upon their book-knowledge of the various theories anent the curricula of crops and the merits of manure, that the important considerations of soil and climate are for the first time brought under their consideration, when they have no means of retreating from a ruinous engagement.

The amusing anecdote concerning the celebrated Lord Kames—an inveterate agricultural experimentalist—and his hind, or overseer, is so well known north of the Tweed, that our only excuse for quoting it here is, that it may not be equally familiar to our southern readers. "John," said his lordship, one day, "I have made a discovery, that will save all this trouble and expense of carting out and spreading the manure about the fields. In short, John, I have found out the way of extracting the *essence of dung*, so that I can carry out as much as will manure a whole field in my waistcoat-pocket." John hung his head and said nothing. "Why, John," resumed his lordship, "you don't appear to see the value of this invention, or—but you don't surely doubt what I'm telling you, John?" "Oh, no, my lord," replied John, "it's no for me to doot any thing your lordship says, but I was just thinking that if your lordship were to carry out the dung in your waistcoat pocket, ye might bring the crap hame in your great coat pocket!"

But Scott had neither skill nor predilection for the pursuits of husbandry. He loved the romance of natural scenery, but his genius tended towards the ornamenting, rather than the fructification of the earth. He longed to have a property of his own upon which to expend the suggestions of his fancy; and in an evil hour he fixed upon a spot which would almost appear to have been selected upon the principle on which a certain author is said to have chosen a theme for versifying—to try, namely, how much could be made out of so barren a subject. The following is the account he gives of his commencing proprietor—the time referred to being the latter end of the year 1810:—

"In the mean time years crept on, and not without their usual deprecations on the passing generation. My sons had arrived at the age when the paternal home was no longer their best abode,\* as both were destined to active life. The field-sports to which I was peculiarly attached, had now less interest, and were replaced by other amusements of a more quiet character, and the means and opportunity of pursuing these were to be sought for. I had, indeed, for some years attended to farming, a knowledge of which is, or at least was then, indispensable to the comforts of a family residing in a solitary country house; but although this was the favourite amusement of many of my friends, I have never been able to consider it as a source of pleasure. I never could think it a matter of passing importance, that my cattle or my crops were better or more plentiful than those of my neighbours; and nevertheless, I began to feel the necessity of some more quiet out-door occupation than I had hitherto pursued. I purchased a small farm of about one hundred acres, with the purpose of planting and improving it, to which property circumstances afterwards enabled me to make considerable additions; and thus an era took place in my life, almost equal to the important one mentioned by the Vicar of Wakefield, when he removed from the Blue-room to the Brown. In point of neighbourhood, at least, the change of residence made little more difference. Abbotsford, to which we removed, was only six or seven miles down the Tweed, and lay on the same beautiful stream. It did not possess the romantic character of Ashiesteel, my former residence; but it had a stretch of meadow-land along the river, and possessed, in the phrase of the landscape-gardener, considerable capabilities. Above all, the land was my own, like Uncle Toby's bowling-green, to do what I would with. It had been, though the gratification was long postponed, an early wish of mine to connect myself with my mother earth, and prosecute those experiments by which a species of creative power is exercised over the face of nature. I can trace, even to childhood, a pleasure derived from Dodsley's account of Shenstone's Leasowes, and I envied the poet much more for the pleasure of accomplishing the objects detailed in his friend's sketch of his grounds, than for the possession of pipe, crook, flock, and Phillis to the boot of all. My memory, also, tenacious of quaint expressions, still retained a phrase which it had gathered from an old almanac of Charles the Second's time, (when every thing down to almanacs affected to be smart,) in which the reader, in the month of June, is advised, for health's sake, to take a walk of a mile or two before break-

\* Introduction to "Rokeby." This, we suspect, is an instance (among others to be afterwards noticed) of Scott's obliviousness of memory in these retrospective prefaces. His eldest son could not at this time have been above ten, and his youngest five, years of age.

fast, and, if he can possibly so manage, to let his exercise be taken on his own land. With the satisfaction of having attained the fulfilment of an early and long-cherished hope, I commenced my improvements, as delightful in their progress as those of the child who first makes a dress for a new doll. The nakedness of the land was in time hidden by woodlands of considerable extent,—the smallest of possible cottages was progressively expanded into a sort of dream of a mansion-house, whimsical in the exterior, but convenient within. Nor did I forget what is the natural pleasure of every man who has been a reader, I mean the filling the shelves of a tolerably large library. All these objects I kept in view, to be executed as convenience should serve; and although I knew many years must elapse before they could be attained, I was of a disposition to comfort myself with the Spanish proverb, ‘Time and I against any two.’

“The difficult and indispensable point of finding a permanent subject of occupation was now at length attained: but there was annexed to it the necessity of becoming again a candidate for public favour; for as I was turned improver on the earth of the every-day world, it was under condition that the small tenement of Parnassus, which might be accessible to my labours, should not remain uncultivated.” The author then proceeds to detail his various mental speculations respecting his next literary undertaking, which terminated in the production of “*Rokeby*.”

The spot which Scott thus fixed upon to connect himself, as he quaintly enough says, with mother earth, was originally named “*Cartley-Hole*,” and is situated on the south bank of the Tweed, about three miles above Melrose. It originally belonged to Dr. Douglas, formerly minister of the neighbouring parish of Galashiels, from whom Scott purchased it. The situation is extremely picturesque, and the whole neighbourhood is rife with the most interesting associations connected with the historical or legendary annals of Scotland. Immediately behind the house, the Eildon Hills, cloven in three by the magic hand of Michael Scott, “lift their bold foreheads to the sky” with peculiar grandeur of effect. The Huntly Burn, where true Thomas of Ercildoun is said to have wooed and won the Queen of Faery-land, is in the neighbourhood. “*Skinnersfield*,” too, where the gallant Buccleuch made a vain attempt to rescue his sovereign from the thralldom of the Douglasses, is not far distant.\* There are also the softer associations called up by the appearance of the “*Cowden-knowes*,” which can be seen from the house. While looking out from amongst the wooded groves that skirt the Tweed, the magnificent ruins of Melrose Abbey are to be espied in the distance.

\* Allan Cunningham, who visited Scott at Abbotsford in 1830, says, that the latter took him to a spot on the Eildon Hill, whence he pointed out to him the sites of no less than fifteen memorable engagements.

Upon the whole, Abbotsford—which appellation, having reference to a neighbouring ford in the Tweed, the poet substituted for its more vulgar primitive title,—has innumerable charms in its situation for a poetic imagination; and we are convinced that it was from these romantic characteristics alone, that Scott was led to fix upon it as the nucleus of his future domain. In intrinsic value, it certainly could have few recommendations in the eye of an experienced agriculturist. Scott afterwards wrought wonders upon it, but those who remember its appearance previous to its passing into his hands, will be aware that the “capabilities” which he speaks of as pertaining to it, existed almost solely in the fertility of his own fancy and the depth of his purse. The greater part of the land, too, adjacent to the original purchase, was utterly barren and worthless. Most of it had formerly been subject to what is called a servitude of *feal and divot* in favour of the villagers of Darnwick and Melrose; and thus, as its vegetable surface was periodically pared off, it at length came to lose all its natural pith, and in fact was reduced to little else than what Scripture terms “a field of stones.” At the time when Scott came to take possession of his property, indeed, in 1811, there could hardly have been seen a more bleak and desolate prospect than the land around “Cartley-Hole” presented. A mean farm-house, with its small “kale-yard” before it; a few small turnip-fields, with their stunted produce; painfully reclaimed from a naked moor, and intersected with a few straggling stripes of unthriving firs; such was the ungracious locality which Scott selected as the site of his future “kingdom,” and upon which he operated, in the course of a few years, a change scarcely less magical than the effect exercised by his writings on the minds of his countrymen. This became, in fact, the principal source of his occupation during his future life; for we believe we may assert, that but for the passionate desire he cherished to create an estate and possess a domestic establishment, suited to his ideas of the rank of a country gentleman, it is very doubtful whether the world would have been gratified with so many, if any, of those splendid productions of his genius which afterwards appeared.

In the year succeeding his removal to Abbotsford, the emoluments of his situation as principal clerk of session, by the new regulation respecting the payment of superannuated officers, before referred to, and of which his predecessor availed himself, for the first time began to fall in to Scott. These, together with what he already possessed, raised his income to upwards of 2000*l.* per annum, a sum certainly sufficient to satisfy the desires of any man of moderate wishes, and amply sufficient to support the rank of a private gentleman in Scott’s station in life. Nor have we ever heard that he exhibited in his own person, at this time, any tendency to private extravagance, beyond the exercise of a

somewhat liberal hospitality. During his residence at Ashiesteel he had kept no equipage, but traveled to and from the metropolis in the mail;\* and, besides, the nature of his occupations necessarily rendered his habits much domesticated. It was clearly, therefore, to the ambition to which we have already adverted, that we must refer the cause of that astonishing assiduity which distinguished him for many years subsequent to the above period.

But it was not until after the commencement of his connection with Mr. Constable, that Scott launched out into those extensive landed speculations, improvements, and buildings, which we will afterwards have to speak of. In the mean time, we will pause a little to advert to his personal appearance and habits at this—the “middle,” as it may be termed—period of his life.

Scott had now (1811) reached the full vigour of manhood, being in his fortieth year, and may be said to be at his prime, both as it respects strength of body and maturity of intellect. His early debility of frame had been succeeded by the most robust health, confirmed, no doubt, by his periodical excursions in the highlands both of the south and north of Scotland; and perhaps it would have been difficult at this time to have found a man of a more powerful and Herculean build. His person, which was upwards of six feet in height, was remarkably round, firm, and compact; while his broad shoulders and long brawny arms showed that he would have been a formidable antagonist in a fray. “I have seen many distinguished poets,” says Allan Cunningham, who about the period we speak of, walked from Dumfries to Edinburgh for the express purpose of seeing the author of the “Lay,” and “Marmion,”—“Burns, Byron, Southey, Wordsworth, Campbell, Rogers, Wilson, Crabbe and Coleridge; but, with the exception of Burns, Scott, for personal vigour, surpasses them all. Burns was, indeed, a powerful man, and Wilson is celebrated for feats of strength and agility; I think, however, the stalworth frame, the long nervous arms, and well knit joints of Scott are worthy of the best days of the border, and would have gained him distinction at the foray which followed the feast of spurs.”

\* There is a curious enough circumstance connected with his journeys betwixt Edinburgh and Ashiesteel, which, we believe, has never before been noticed, if, indeed, at all known. We have remarked Scott’s predilection for dogs in his boyhood, and this passion remained strong within him through life. Accordingly, in traveling betwixt his town and country residences, he was constantly attended by some favourite of the canine species, and in order to make sure of its company, and perhaps to obviate any risk of grumbling on the part of guards and drivers, he uniformly *took a seat for the dog as well as himself!* This anecdote we have from a literary friend, who says that it was from his hearing of this circumstance that his boyish attention was first attracted towards the singularity of Scott’s character.

As yet, too, his lameness, which afterwards affected his walking so materially, gave him but little inconvenience. Nor had "Time thinned his flowing locks," which were of a pale auburn colour, smooth and silky. His complexion was also fresh and ruddy, bespeaking exuberant health.

His attendance at his post in the inner division of the parliament house, during the time of session, was most punctual, being generally from about ten to two o'clock of the day. His duties, however, were of so trivial a nature, consisting almost solely in taking down the decisions, or interlocutors, as they are called, pronounced by the judges in the various cases brought before them, that he had much leisure to employ himself about other matters. Accordingly, he was in the habit of writing a great portion of his extensive correspondence in the sanctuary of Themis herself, whom he had so traitorously deserted; and even, it is said, devoted much of his time to composition. For example, we have been told that "Harold the Dauntless" was wholly written there, during the intervals between the registration of one case and the decision of another. We have heard, also, an anecdote in reference to this practice of Scott, which is worthy of being recorded here. A remarkably interesting case happened to be heard one day in the division to which he belonged, in which his friend Jeffrey was engaged. In his address, the pleader displayed more than his usual brilliancy; he had become personally interested in the subject, and his eloquence, in consequence, waxed more and more animated and energetic as he proceeded. He was not so much engrossed with it, however, but that his falcon eye discerned the pen of Scott, as he himself was approaching, as it were, the acme of his argument, flying over the paper at a most unwonted rate, as if striving to keep pace with the torrent of language that was flowing from his own lips. Aware of Scott's habitual indifference to the judicial proceedings of the court, Jeffrey, after his speech was concluded, leant over the bar which separates the advocates from the clerk's table, and requested, with a knowing smile, a sight of the *notes* which his friend had been writing down so assiduously. Scott at once handed him the manuscript, which proved to be the complete draft of his warlike and spirit-stirring lyric,

" Pibroch of Donnhuil Dhu,  
Pibroch of Donnhuil,  
Wake your wild voice anew,  
Summon Glenconnel —,"

and written off without a word of correction. The poet at the same time stated to his friend, that whatever spirit the verses contained, was owing entirely to his own eloquence; that he had begun to scribble the

first two or three lines without having the slightest idea of what was to follow, or even of composing at all, but that the rapid and increasing volume of his friend's oratory ringing in his ears—although perfectly unconscious of its purport—had carried him on with his subject with an enthusiasm which it might be supposed would have been awakened by the commanding strains of "Donnhuil Dhu" himself. This is certainly one of the most remarkable tributes ever paid to the faculty of eloquence; and those who recollect the singularly animated little lyric, thus strangely brought forth, which increases in rapidity and force of diction from the beginning to the very last word, will acknowledge that the story, if untrue, is at least far from being improbable.

But Scott not unfrequently gave rather serious proofs of his inattention to the legal proceedings which it was his duty to watch, and we have been informed of repeated blunders committed by him in reporting the interlocutors of the court. In one case wherein a friend of ours was engaged, and which was heard in full presence—that is to say, before the whole fifteen judges—Scott drew out the decision in terms the very reverse of what had been pronounced by their lordships. The interlocutor was luckily inspected before being signed, (otherwise the whole case must necessarily have been re-heard,) and the error was rectified by a new one mutually concocted between the agents and counsel of the parties.

Frequently Scott sat doing nothing but staring about him in a vacant manner, with his under lip far drawn into his mouth, as if he experienced a difficulty in breathing. At such times his countenance seemed to have rather a stolid expression, but to those who examined it closely, it evidently arose from the intensity of internal rumination. He would frequently cast his eyes up to the gallery, which fronted the bench, and when any strange looking rustic lout happened to be there, he usually watched his demeanour for a good while, and often broke out into a hearty laugh, as if tickled by the associations called up by the appearance of the personage before him. During these involuntary cachinations, his face assumed a peculiarly droll expression. His eyes, which, in what may be termed the moments of repose, gave little animation to his features, appeared then to light up the whole visage with the sunshine of humour. The colour of these organs it is not very easy to describe, but from our own recollection of them, (and we had for many years daily opportunities for such personal observations,) we would characterize them as of a sort of grayish blue, small, but when looked into, of mysterious *depth*, and glowing with a burning light. They were surrounded by numerous diverging lines, which increased greatly the expression of the ludicrous in his countenance, and possessed the extraordinary property of shutting as much from below as above.

Even the nose, which was the least gainly feature of his face, contributed to enhance its humorous character, which was the aspect it generally wore, especially in company, from the habitual cheerfulness of his mind. When talking on any subject of a sacred or affecting nature, however, his features assumed an expression of deep solemnity and feeling.

The extraordinary elevation of his head, which rose like a cone upwards from his eyebrows—the latter being uncommonly prominent and shaggy—was the most remarkable object in Scott's appearance. The measurement of the part below the eyes was fully an inch and a half less than that above, which, according to the rules of phrenology, denoted powerful intellectuality of character. The nose was far separated from the mouth, and the sort of grooved hollow which connects these two features was deep and strongly marked, giving an appearance of firmness and decision to the whole face, to which a small and undistinguished chin—usually supposed to denote the reverse of genius—would otherwise have given a sort of cast of irresolution. He was always dressed in a full suit of black, with a full linen collar generally falling over his ample white neckcloth.

Such was Scott's personal appearance at the middle term of his life, and we may say for nearly ten years afterwards, for it was not until after recovering from a severe illness in 1819, that any discernible marks of old age could be seen in his features or person. His hair, however, then became a silvery gray, his lameness increased, and his face began to be seamed with wrinkles. At the time we speak of he was in the habit of walking about a good deal in the outer-house—a practice which he latterly left almost entirely off—and from his halt and his towering head he was a most conspicuous figure. He was oftener seen walking alone than might have been expected in one so extensively acquainted, and this more particularly after suspicion had affixed to him the authorship of the *Waverley Novels*. In fact, it appeared as if his acquaintances scrupled to occupy, in trivial conversation, the time of one who had such a multiplicity of avocations on hand, and to consider that every moment so wasted would just delay the publication of the *next novel* so much the longer. He would sometimes be observed to rise suddenly from his seat in the inner-house, pass through the northern door of the outer-hall, and thence up stairs to the Advocates' Library. Whilst sitting in one or other of the recesses there, poring over, and taking notes from, some large antique folio, groups of strangers were to be seen walking backwards and forwards through the library, in order to take a leisurely view of him, and imprint his features on their memory. After he had risen and departed, these strangers would hasten up to the desk and carry off the pens which they had seen him use, to be preserved as



relics, while they also endeavoured, by examining the volume he had been using, to form a conjecture at the character of the next work which was to appear from his pen. Speaking of pens, we may remark *en passant*, that he always used Bramah's patent pens whilst writing at home. And to this circumstance he evidently alludes in the introduction to the "Fortunes of Nigel:"—

"There is my friend Allan (Cunningham) has written just such a play as I might write myself in a very sunny day, and with one of Bramah's extra patent pens. I cannot make neat work without such appurtenances."\*

Scott was not a less conspicuous figure on the street, than within doors. The point of the stick, which assisted him in walking, was placed close to the inner side of the large toe of his right foot—the lame one—over which the rest of his tall robust person projected considerably; so that, in more ways than one, his head may be said to have kept always in advance of his feet. His eyes were constantly fixed on the ground; and he would frequently pause for a minute or two in complete abstraction of mind. In reference to this habit of reverie in public, we have to quote another anecdote by Mr. Cunningham, illustrative of the fact, in the account of his pilgrimage from Dumfries-shire to Edinburgh in 1809, before spoken of.

\* We cannot forbear quoting more of this passage, as affording another proof of the kind and benevolent feeling which Scott cherished towards every cotemporary son of genius, and the pleasure he seemed to derive from any opportunity that offered itself for speaking a good word in their behalf with the world. A conversation is supposed to be holding between Captain Clutterbuck and the Author of Waverley:—

"*Captain.* I still advise a volume of dramas like Lord Byron's.

*Author.* No, his lordship is a cut above me,—I won't run my horse against his, if I can help myself. But there is my friend Allan has written just such a play, as I might write myself in a very sunny day, and with one of Bramah's extra patent pens. I cannot make neat work without such appurtenances.

*Captain.* Do you mean Allan Ramsay?

*Author.* No, nor Barbara Allan either. I mean Allan Cunningham, who has just published his tragedy of Sir Marmaduke Maxwell, full of merry-making and murdering, kissing and cutting of throats, and passages which lead to nothing, and which are very pretty passages for all that. Not a glimpse of probability is there about the plot, but so much animation in particular passages, and such a vein of poetry through the whole, as I dearly wish I could infuse into my Culi-nary Remains, should I ever be tempted to publish them. With a popular impress, people would read and admire the beauties of Allan—as it is, they may perhaps only note his defects,—or, what is worse, not note him at all.—But never mind them, honest Allan; you are a credit to Caledonia for all that.—There are some lyrical effusions of his, too, which you would do well to read, *Captain.* 'Its hame, and its hame,' is equal to Burns.

*Captain.* I will take the hint," &c. &c.

"I have reason to remember," says Cunningham, "his house in North Castle street; for various wanderings I had before it with the hope of seeing the poet; and though I was gratified at last, I did not succeed, till I had in a manner become familiarly acquainted with almost every stone which composed the front of the building. My wanderings, too, were attended with something like an adventure. I did not know a soul in Edinburgh who could introduce me, or rather I had such a sense of my own unworthiness, as, compared to so great a poet, that I did not desire an introduction, but strove to see him and peruse his face, without being put to the torture of conversation.—I could have faced a battery sooner. On the second or third day of my pilgrimage, I had passed and repassed before the house several times, when, to my surprise, a lady looked out at a window in the adjoining house, and calling me by name, desired a servant to open the door and let me in. This was a person of some consideration in my native place, who was residing there with her family, to whom I was slightly known. 'I saw you,' she said, 'walking up and down, and thought you might as well spend your time here as waste it in the street.' 'I was not exactly wasting it,' I answered; 'I am come to Edinburgh to see Walter Scott, and as he lives here, I hope to see him as he goes into his own house.' 'This is an affair of poetry, then, I find,' said the lady, with a smile: 'I cannot help you, for I have not the honour of his acquaintance, though his neighbour; but you shall see him nevertheless, for this is about his time of coming home—and here he is!' 'What!' I said, 'that tall, stalwart man, with the staff in his hand, and ——?' 'The same, the same!' answered my friend, laying her hand on my arm; 'speak softly. Why, I protest he is coming here!' Scott passed his own door, and—the houses of Edinburgh, it must be borne in mind, are as like one another as bricks—walked up the steps of that in which I was, and announced himself with the knocker. He was instantly admitted. He was in some poetic reverie or other, and had made a mistake; he no sooner saw the bonnets of three or four boys on the pegs where he was about to hang his hat than he said loud enough for us to hear him, 'Hey-day! here's owre mony bairns' bonnets for the house to be mine!' and apologising to the servant, withdrew hastily."

As we have been led into giving an account of Scott's personal characteristics in this place—somewhat prematurely perhaps, and at greater length than we at first intended—we may also notice another peculiarity belonging to him. This was his strong, rough, guttural pronunciation of the letter *r*, so peculiar to the natives of Northumberland, and vulgarly termed a *burr*. This habit of orthoepy was so inveterate in him as even to affect his *ear* in the construction of his verse; and numerous lines could be pointed out in his poems where he has given that single

letter the importance of two syllables, or at least a syllable and a half; thus giving to his metre in the eyes of those unacquainted with his peculiarity, the appearance in many places of being defective; as for example,—

“From the voice of the coming stor (u) n.”

and—

“Shall tame the unicolor (u) n’s pride,”

in the first canto of the Lay of the Last Minstrel.

Before again resuming consideration of Scott’s literary career, we may here notice a circumstance which strongly marks the estimation in which he was then held by his countrymen, both as a poet and a citizen. On the 22d December, 1813, the lord provost, magistrates and council of Edinburgh, voted him the freedom of the city, and at the same time presented him with a silver tankard, on which was a medalion, containing the following flattering inscription from the elegant pen of Dr. Gregory :—

GUALTERUM SCOTT,

DE ABBOTSFORD,

Virum summi ingenii;

Scriptorem elegantem;

Poetarum sui seculi principem

Patriz Decus;

Ob varia erga ipsam merita,

In civium suorum numerum

Grata ascripsit Civitas Edinburgensis

Et hoc cantharo donavit.

A. D. M.DCCC.XIII.

We have now to turn to the last, but not the least important branch, certainly, of our critical task—Scott’s prose romances; and, we confess, we do so with no slight degree of diffidence. In many respects it is by much the more agreeable part of our undertaking; but we are, at the same time, but too conscious of underlying the disadvantage of comparison with the host of others who have preceded us, with many of whom it would be the height of presumption in us to attempt to measure our efforts. One advantage, however, we possess, that if we are the last in the field, and can, therefore, hope to glean but little that is new with our hands, we are enabled to collate, and present to the world, in a concise form, the result of the labours of our predecessors. If the part of our task, therefore, at which we have now arrived, be found to contain less of what is new and analytical than is to be found in their lucubrations, we are humbly confident, that it will be found equally explanatory, and, at the same time, more amusing.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FROM THE PUBLICATION OF "WAVERLEY" IN 1814, TO THE PUBLICATION OF *ROB ROY* IN 1818.

It is usual, we believe, to associate the rise of Scott as a prose writer with the decline of his popularity as a poet,—whether the supposed cause of the latter was a waning of his own powers, the capricious fickleness of the public, or the superior claims of a rival. For our own part, we are inclined to attribute the transition in his style of composition—for the change goes no farther—to a very different reason ; being neither more nor less than the redundant exuberance of the author's genius. We are persuaded, in short, that Scott would have betaken himself naturally to prose romance, had neither Byron appeared, nor the public opinion of his poetic powers, (from whatever cause,) become colder. This conclusion seems fully warranted, as well by the means which Scott has himself left us of forming a judgment on the subject, as by other collateral evidence which we have taken considerable pains to collate and compare. We are, at the same time, compelled to remark, that in the account which the author gives of the process of transfiguration, as it may be termed, of his literary character—written, it must be kept in mind, at a very late period of life—there occur many discrepancies as to dates and assertions, which unfortunately tend to throw an air of dubiety over it, as well as over many other parts of these explanatory chapters. These we shall notice after allowing the author to tell his own story, as all must feel interested in acquiring an exact knowledge of every circumstance connected with the origin of the remarkable series of productions now under consideration.

"It makes no part of the present story\* to detail how the success of a few ballads had the effect of changing all the purpose and tenor of my life, and of converting a pains-taking lawyer, of some years' standing, into a follower of literature. It is enough to say, that I had assumed the latter character for several years, before I seriously thought of attempting a work of imagination in prose, although one or two of my poetical attempts did not differ from romance, otherwise than by being written in verse. But yet I may observe, that about this time (now,

\* General Preface to new edition of Waverley novels, 1829.

alas! thirty years since) I had nourished the ambitious desire of composing a tale of chivalry, which was to be in the style of the *Castle of Otranto*, with plenty of Border characters and supernatural incident. Having found unexpectedly a chapter of this intended work\* among some old papers, I have subjoined it to this introductory essay, thinking some readers may account as curious the first attempts at romantic composition by an author who has written so much in that department. \* \* \* This particular subject was never resumed, but I did not abandon the idea of fictitious composition in prose, though I determined to give another turn to the style of the work.

"My early recollections of the Highland scenery and customs made so favourable an impression in the poem called the '*Lady of the Lake*,' that I was induced to think of attempting something of the same kind in prose. I had been a good deal in the Highlands at a time when they were much less accessible and much less visited, than they have been of late years, and was acquainted with many of the old warriors of 1745, who were, like most veterans, easily induced to fight their battles over again, for the benefit of a willing listener like myself. It naturally occurred to me, that the ancient traditions and high spirit of a people, who, living in a civilized age and country, retained so strong a tincture of manners belonging to an early period of society, must afford a subject favourable for romance, if it should not prove a curious tale marred in the telling.

"It was with some idea of this kind, that about the year 1805, I threw together about one-third part of the first volume of '*Waverly*.' It was advertised to be published by the late Mr. John Ballantyne, bookseller in Edinburgh, under the name of '*Waverly*; or, '*Tis Fifty Years Since*,'—a title afterwards altered to '*Tis Sixty Years Since*,' that the actual date of publication might be made to correspond with the period in which the scene was laid. Having proceeded so far, I think, as the seventh chapter, I showed my work to a critical friend, whose opinion was unfavourable; and having then some poetical reputation, I was unwilling to risk the loss of it by attempting a new style of composition. I therefore threw aside the work I had commenced without either reluctance or remonstrance. \* \* \* This portion of the manuscript was laid aside in the drawers of an old desk, which, on my first coming to reside at Abbotsford, in 1811, was placed in a lumber garret and entirely forgotten."

Those of our readers who have minutely attended to the tenor of our narrative, will be at no loss to discern the confused and contradictory statements in the preceding "explanations." In the first place, the

\* Intended to have been called "*Thomas the Rhymer*."

writer says that he never thought of attempting any imaginary work in prose until "several years" after he had embraced the profession of literature; adding, in the next sentence, that the period of his adopting the latter resolution was "thirty years since,"—that is to say, in the year 1799. Now it will be recollected that at the year 1799, his only productions were two or three translations from the German, and a couple of original ballads, which, from the terms in which he refers to them in another place, he by no means seemed to reckon decisive of his claims to the literary character; and he moreover tells us, in the introduction to his poetical works, that it was not until the year 1803 that he entertained any serious thoughts of embracing the profession of literature at all. Again, one would be led to suppose from the succeeding paragraph, that it was owing to the success of the "Lady of the Lake," (published in 1810,) he was *first* led to think of attempting a prose work, embracing the same description of character and scenery,—in short, "Waverley,"—which he immediately thereafter says was commenced in 1805!

We know not how to explain these incongruities, unless by the supposition of a lapse of the pen, or the memory, on the part of Scott. Respecting the first prose attempt alluded to—a contemplated romance, in which he meant to bring forward true Thomas of Ercildoun as a principal character—the question is of little consequence. Not more than eight pages of it were written, and there is nothing in these indicative either of the intended plot, or the author's purpose or power of managing it. We are inclined to think that the idea suggested itself to him during his antiquarian investigations respecting the romance of "Sir Tristrem," which must have engaged his attention for several years previous to its publication in 1804.

"With regard to "Waverley," however, the dubiety we have pointed out is more important; and many circumstances lead us to suppose that Scott, although he may have *contemplated* such a work, nay even commenced it, has antedated by several years the period of his writing out so large a portion as he mentions. There is one strong fact in corroboration of this opinion. He speaks as if the intended production was advertised to be published by Mr. Ballantyne, immediately upon its being so far proceeded with. Now, we have seen that Scott's connection with Ballantyne did not commence until 1809—four years later than the period assigned by him to the commencement of "Waverley." We have a confirmation of our suspicions, moreover, in the trust-worthy testimony of Mr. Cunningham. "There is a secret," says he, "in the history of the composition of these works, not as yet, I believe, fully revealed. During the year in which 'Marmion' was published, I was told by one, *who had the means of knowing,*

that Scott was busied with a work, *the scenes of which were laid in the rebellion of 1745*, and that considerable progress was made."

This perfectly agrees with our own conjectures, and, in fact, leaves no doubt in our mind on the subject. It is true, Scott goes on to state, that the success of Miss Edgeworth's national novels, and his being employed to complete Mr. Strutt's "Queen-Hoo Hall" in 1808, afterwards instigated him to complete the "*unfinished*" work. We cannot help thinking, however, that the correct reading ought to be, that he felt a renovated desire to commence the work he had previously *contemplated*.

But there is also another strange anachronism in Scott's statement (in the "General Preface" to his novels of which we are speaking) respecting the originally *intended*, and subsequently *adopted* title of the work, which, we believe, was first pointed out by Mr. Chambers. Scott says, that this was originally (i. e. in 1805, as he alleges) "'Tis fifty years since;" but, from the postponement of the work, it was afterwards altered to "'Tis sixty years since;" in order that the actual publication of the work might correspond with the period in which the scene was laid. Now, it will be observed, that the era of 1745 was, in reality, just *sixty* years antecedent to that of 1805; and that if any alteration in the title was necessary to suit it to the date of publication, it ought to have been, at least, "'Tis *seventy* years since." This oversight is the more remarkable, that in the introductory chapter to the novel, as originally published, in which the author affects to be writing in 1805, the space of time betwixt the scene of the plot and the time of writing is correctly set down—namely, "sixty years since."

All this argues a confusion of dates and circumstances in the memory of the illustrious author, whilst engaged in his revision of the works of his earlier years, which, we are inclined to think, betrays the shadow which was settling down on his once unclouded intellect, long ere the lamentable casualty was suspected of drawing near. We regret that our duty as biographers compels us to notice the fact, as the circumstances must unquestionably militate against the general credibility of the recently penned autobiographical chapters prefixed to his various works. But if we have established any thing to Scott's prejudice, in this respect, it ought to be kept in mind, that we have likewise been endeavouring to prove more than an equivalent as respects his general fame—namely, that the production of his prose works originated solely from the overflowing fulness of his own fancy, and not from any feeling of necessity for chalking out a new course of literary labour in consequence of the superior claims of a rival in his earlier path of occupation. But we will dismiss the subject for a more inviting theme,—the occasion of his recommencing his incompleted romance, which, as he has

told us, had been thrown by and forgotten in a lumber garret at his removal to Abbotsford in 1811.

"I happened," he says, "to want some fishing tackle for the use of a guest, when it occurred to me to search the old writing-desk already mentioned, in which I used to keep articles of that nature. I got access to it with some difficulty; and in looking for lines and flies, the long-lost manuscript presented itself. I immediately set to work to complete it, according to my original purpose,"—and it was completed accordingly.

"*Waverley*" appeared early in 1814, immediately previous to Scott's setting out on a tour through the Highlands and Islands of the north of Scotland, with the view of making himself acquainted with the localities which he meant to treat of in the "*Lord of the Isles*."\* At first the

\* There are two small poetical relics connected with this journey, which, being short, and besides little known, we reckon worthy of insertion here. The one is preserved in the album of the Bell Rock light-house, which Scott stopped to inspect, and is as follows:—

"Far in the bosom of the deep  
O'er these wild shelves my watch I keep,  
A ruddy gem of changeful light  
Bound on the dusky brow of night.  
The seaman bids my lustre hail,  
And scorns to strike his timorous sail.

WALTER SCOTT."

July 30, 1814.

The other has been kindly communicated to us by Mr. Chambers, who observes, that "even in such a trifle the hand of a master could not be concealed." It was written by Scott in the album of the inn at Ulva, the ferry to Staffa.

"Staffa! sprung from high Macdonald,  
Worthy branch of old Clanronald!  
Staffa! king of all good fellows,  
Well befall thy hills and vallies,  
Lakes and inlets, deeps and shallows;  
Cliffs of darkness, caves of wonder,  
Echoing the Atlantic's thunder,—  
Mountains which the gray mist covers,  
Where the chieftain's spirit hovers,  
Pausing as his pinions quiver,  
Stretched to quit his land for ever!  
Each kind influence rest above thee,  
And thou lov'st, and all who love thee.  
Warmer heart 'twixt this and Jaffa,  
Beats not than in breast of Staffa!

W. S."



fate of the romance seemed extremely doubtful,—a fact which may be held as the most undoubted proof of its striking originality. The public, in fact, was as much puzzled what to think of it, as were the two critics to whom Scott submitted the first specimen of his poetical romances. In a few weeks, however, it began to win its way, and when he returned from his northern trip, he had the high gratification of finding the whole world astir on the subject, and curiosity in full cry after the name of the author. We can suppose his feelings on the occasion to have been somewhat similar to those of Franklin when he drew the first spark of electrical fire from the thunder-cloud; and his sensations of triumph, he tells us, were the more completely happy, that they were confined solely to his own bosom. “The knowledge that I had the public approbation,” he says, “was like having the property of a hidden treasure, not the less gratifying than if all the world knew it was his own. I did not the less feel gratified for the public favour, although I did not proclaim it,—as the lover who wears his mistress’s favour in his bosom is as proud, though not so vain of possessing it, as another who displays the token of her grace upon his bonnet.”

He had taken effectual measures before-hand to secure the enjoyment of his solitary meal; his modesty preventing him from anticipating whether the dish was to prove sweet or bitter. “My original motive,” he says, “for publishing the work anonymously, was the consciousness that it was an experiment on the public taste which might very probably fail, and therefore there was no occasion to take on myself the personal risk of discomfiture. For this purpose considerable precautions were used to preserve secrecy. My old friend and school-fellow, Mr. James Ballantyne, who printed these novels, had the exclusive task of corresponding with the author, who thus had not only the advantage of his professional talents, but also of his critical abilities. The original manuscript, or, as it is technically called *copy*, was transcribed under Mr. Ballantyne’s eye by confidential persons; nor was there an instance of treachery during the many years in which these precautions were resorted to, although various individuals were employed at different times. Double proof-sheets were regularly printed off. One was forwarded to the author by Mr. Ballantyne, and the alterations which it received were, by his own hand, copied upon the other proof-sheet for the use of the printers, so that even the corrected proofs of the author were never seen in the printing office; and thus the curiosity of such eager inquirers as made the most minute investigations, was entirely at fault.”

Scott afterwards goes on to say, that one of his chief reasons for keeping *sub umbra*, and that more especially after the success of *Waverley*, was the desire of obviating all personal discussions respect-

ing his own productions—a motive which every literary man of correct feeling will sufficiently understand. “It is in every case,” he most justly observes, “a dangerous intercourse for an author to be dwelling continually among those who make his writings a frequent and familiar subject of conversation, but who must necessarily be partial judges of works composed in their own society. The habits of self-importance which are thus acquired by authors, are highly injurious to a well regulated mind; for the cup of flattery, if it does not, like that of Circe, reduce men to the level of beasts, is sure, if eagerly drained, to bring the best and the ablest down to that of fools. This risk was in some degree prevented by the mask which I wore; and my own stores of self-conceit were left to their natural course without being enhanced by the partiality of friends, or adulation of flatterers.”

Coming from almost any other individual than Scott, we would be apt to suspect something of affectation in this expressed apprehension for his own equanimity. It might be supposed that the man who could calmly receive the incense offered up to him as the “Monarch of Parnassus,” would run little risk of being intoxicated with the fame accruing from his supremacy as a novelist. But while the whole tenor of Scott’s conduct attest the manly simplicity of his mind, and his perfect freedom equally from assumed modesty and undue bashfulness, it must be recollected that the crisis of the publication of “Waverley” was a much more trying one than the period of his enlisting in the service of the muses. He had then, so to speak, no character to lose; now he had set his whole chances of fortune and reputation upon the cast of a single hazardous experiment; and we can liken his situation to nothing so much as that of the physician, who in some extreme case administers a desperate dose to his patient, risking, upon the result, his whole stock of already acquired celebrity, as well as his future chances of success in his profession. It is true that if the experiment had failed, Scott had effectually obviated the displeasing consequence of having the finger of derision pointed at him in public. But the pain of his own feelings would not have been the less acute, nor the cloud thereby cast over his future literary prospects the less chilling and gloomy. His feelings of exultation at his success must, therefore, have been proportionably strong; and his mind one of no ordinary calmness, that, at a crisis so triumphant, could refrain from coming personally forward to claim the applause which the public was lavishing upon they knew not whom. But modesty is almost as invariably the concomitant of true genius, as vanity is found to be the right-hand comrade of folly.

In the course of two months, twelve thousand copies of “Waverley” were dispersed through England and Scotland, and the delight as well

as the curiosity of the public became every day stronger and more universal. And this, be it observed, in the absence of any recommendation from the critics, who were for some time as much puzzled what to say or think, as the highland cateran in the popular story on getting hold of a watch for the first time. Like him, too, however, they concluded that it must be *something*; but they observed the most wary caution in their expressions of praise and blame. Such a scene was "novel and striking"—such a character "forcibly drawn"—the diction in this place was "animated," and in that "pathetic;" but wary were they in attempting to strike a balance betwixt the supposed merits and defects of the whole, and pronouncing a decision on its general character. The public, therefore, took the matter into their own hands; and as criticism had no effect in stimulating, so we believe it would have been found quite as ineffectual in checking, the enthusiastic admiration of our countrymen.

"Waverley" was of an entirely distinct species of fictitious composition from any that had ever preceded it. It was the first attempt that had been made to combine at once the real and the imaginative—the transactions of history with the incidents of individual adventure. In these respects, it was decidedly *original* both in conception and execution. Without aiming at an imitation of the graphic but gross and low-life scenes of Fielding, or the ludicrous caricatures of Smollet, Scott kept quite as far apart from the fine-spun sentimentalism of their successors: and while he endeavoured to draw with equal fidelity with the two great founders of the British school of novelists, characters belonging to the humblest classes of society, he likewise sought for materials to interest and amuse amongst the polished circles and scenes of fashionable life.

The chief professed purpose of "Waverley" was to illustrate the manners of the Highlanders of Scotland, at a particular period; and with this view Scott judiciously fixed on an era of turbulent events which drew into their vortex all classes of men, and brought out their characters in all their various shades. Although feudalism had long been abolished by law, and actually annihilated in the lowland parts of Scotland, it still prevailed in all its pristine vigour of clanship and hereditary chieftainship in the mountain fastnesses of the northern part of the island. The change, indeed, which had been gradually taking place in the habits and manners of the inhabitants in the former districts, had as yet served only to estrange them more and more from their still uncivilized countrymen, and to make the latter draw more closely around them the mantle of barbaric ignorance and pride. Accordingly, amid the improvements that were rapidly going on in the manners and condition of society around them, those of the Highlanders remained stationary, and they even gloried in thinking that civilization,

as Callum Beg said of Sunday, had not as yet come "aboon the pass of Bally-Brough."

The prime cause of this disunion among the natives of two portions of the same island, was unquestionably the difference which existed in their respective political creeds,—the Highlanders, who were still for the most part staunch Jacobites, regarding the conforming of the Lowlanders to the new dynasty of Hanover, as a species of apostacy only inferior in heinousness to a breach of fealty in a clansman towards his own *natural* chieftain. On this account, and not less as being the more immediate instruments of putting in force the new and severe laws for restraining their own turbulence, and executing the decrees of justice against them, the Lowlanders were generally regarded with even more detestation by the Gael, than were the Saxons or Southrons. In such a state of things, it may be imagined that little intercommunion took place betwixt the two former, and the mountaineers as yet remained an "especial people," whose manners, habits, occupations, and country, were almost totally unknown to the rest of mankind,—by whom, indeed, they were generally regarded as little else than a horde of incorrigible savages and unprincipled robbers. It will be seen what a rich fund of materials thus lay open to one of Scott's powers of description; and he judiciously fixed on the era of 1745—which developed so many noble traits of incorruptible fidelity, unconquerable valour, and devoted loyalty in the character of the Gael—as well to enrich his pages with the interest attached to those memorable historical occurrences, as from its affording the fairest opportunity of contrasting the principles and habits which distinguished the various classes of persons which then divided the country.

Scott was perhaps, above any other man then living, eminently qualified for such an undertaking. He had the whole history of Scotland, established and traditionary, by rote. In his various excursions to the Highlands, he had enjoyed opportunities possessed by few, of making himself acquainted with the scenery of the north, and the manners and character of the rude mountaineers; whilst from those who had been personally engaged in the cause of Charles Stuart, he heard accounts of many curious and romantic incidents and private adventures, and was made acquainted with the localities where they actually happened. Many of the latter he has woven into the tale with remarkable effect, and they tell the more forcibly from our assurance of their truth.

One of Scott's informants on these topics, was Mr. Stewart of Invernahyle, whom we noticed in an early part of our memoir, as having been *out* in the 1745; and the author has accordingly introduced one of that gentleman's private adventures in a manner that renders it one of

the most interesting incidents in the tale. We allude, of course, to the rencontre betwixt Waverley and Colonel Talbot at the battle of Prestonpans, and the mutual good offices they rendered each other in that period of peril. As the whole plot, indeed, may be said to turn on this event, we think it proper, in this place, to introduce a brief outline of the original story.

When the Highlanders, upon the morning of the battle of Preston, made their memorable and irresistible charge, a battery of four field-pieces was stormed and carried by the Camerons and the Stewarts of Appin. Mr. Stewart of Invernahyle was one of the foremost in the charge, and observed an officer of the king's forces, who, scorning to join the flight of all around, remained with his sword in his hand, as if determined to defend to the very last the post assigned to him. Mr. Stewart called to him to surrender, but only received a thrust of the sword in reply, which he caught in his target. The now defenceless officer was on the point of being cut down by a gigantic Highlander, (the miller of Invernahyle,) who had his battle-axe heaved up for that purpose, when Mr. Stewart averted the blow, and prevailed on his antagonist to surrender. Mr. Stewart took charge of his captive's property, protected his person, and finally obtained him his liberty on parole. The officer proved to be Colonel Allan Whitefoord\* of Ballochmyle in Ayrshire, a man of high character and influence, and warmly attached to the House of Hanover; yet such was the confidence existing between these two honourable men, though of different political principles, that while the civil war was raging, and straggling officers from the Highland army were executed without mercy, (as was the case with Mr. M'Donald of Kinloch, Moidart,) Invernahyle hesitated not to pay his late captive a visit, as he went back to the Highlands to raise fresh recruits, when he spent a few days among Colonel Whitefoord's Whig friends as pleasantly and good-humouredly as if all had been at peace around him. After the battle of Culloden it was Colonel Whitefoord's turn to strain every nerve to obtain Mr. Stewart's pardon. He went to the Lord Justice Clerk, to the Lord Advocate, and to all the officers of state in succession, and each application was answered by the production of a list of denounced rebels, in all of which Invernahyle had (as the good old gentleman was wont to express it) the "mark of the beast" opposite his name. Almost despairing of success, he waited on the Duke of Cumberland himself; but from him also he received a positive refusal. He then limited his request, for the present, to a protection for

\* Ancestor of Sir John Whitefoord, whom Burns, in one of his letters, says, was "the first gentleman in the country who interested himself in his welfare unconnected and unknown."

Mr. Stewart's house, wife, children and property. This also was refused; upon which Colonel Whiteford, taking his commission from his bosom, laid it on the table before His Royal Highness, and asked permission to retire from the service of a sovereign who knew not how to spare a vanquished enemy. The duke was equally struck and affected at this circumstance. He bade the colonel take up his commission, and granted the protection he required with so much earnestness. It was issued just in time to save the house, corn and cattle, at Invernahyle, from the troops who were engaged in laying waste what was then termed "the country of the enemy." A small encampment of soldiers was formed on Mr. Stewart's property, which they spared while plundering the country around, searching in every direction for the leaders of the insurrection, and particularly for Mr. Stewart.

Such noble traits of the human character are almost the only circumstances afforded us to brighten the horrors of civil warfare. It was also from the perilous situation of the above gentleman, while in *hiding*, that Scott took the incident in which the Baron of Bradwardine in the novel is represented as making a narrow escape with his life. Mr. Stewart was concealed in a cave so near his own abode, that he lay within hearing of the sentinels, as they called their watchword. His food was brought to him by one of his daughters, a child of eight years old, whom Mrs. Stewart was under the necessity of intrusting with this commission, for her own motions and those of her inmates were closely watched. With sagacity and adroitness beyond her years, the child used to mingle familiarly among the soldiers, with whom she was a favourite, and watch the proper moment for stealing unobserved into the thicket, and there depositing the small store of provisions she had concealed about her person for the support of her aged parent, at a spot which he had previously been advertised where to find it. In this scanty and precarious way Invernahyle was supported for several weeks, meanwhile suffering great torture from the still undressed wounds which he had received at Culloden. After the soldiers had been withdrawn from his mansion, but still posted near it, he had the remarkable escape which Scott had assigned to Cosmo Cosmayne Bradwardine. Mr. Stewart ventured to leave his hiding place at night for his own house, whence he returned early in the morning. On one occasion, in the gray of the dawn, he was seen by a party of the soldiers, who fired at and pursued him. He fortunately escaped, but the soldiers returned to the house and charged the family with harbouring the insurgents. An old woman had presence of mind enough to maintain, that the person they had seen was the shepherd; and when they demanded why he did not stop when called to, she replied, "He is as deaf, puir man, as a peat-stack!" The shepherd was immediately ordered to be sent

for, but as there was an opportunity of tutoring him by the way, he easily succeeded in completing the imposition which the old housemaid had commenced.

Mr. Stewart ultimately enjoyed the benefit of the Act of Indemnity. Amongst his other achievements, was one which few besides himself ever lived to boast of. This was his encountering Rob Roy, in a single handed duel with the broad-sword, and parting with him on equal terms. This duel is said to have been fought at the clachan of Balquidder, in the churchyard of which the bones of the celebrated freebooter now repose.

Unless as regards the incidents above mentioned, Mr. Stewart of Invernahyle has no identity whatever with the owner of the "Blessed Bear;" and the general outlines of their respective characters are otherwise entirely dissimilar. The one is a pedantic but polished Lowland gentleman of the school peculiar to the middle of last century; the other a rough, hearty old Highlander, (although courteous after his own fashion,) proud of his pedigree, his clan, and his tartans. The baron is represented as being a lover of peace rather than of war, but betaking himself to the latter, when he deemed it incumbent on him, with as much composure as he would sit down to breakfast. Invernahyle, on the other hand, appears to have been one who would take up a desperate cause for the simple reason that it was so; and, as Scott tells us, he gloried, even in extreme old age, in the prospect of drawing his claymore against Paul Jones, when that daring captain menaced an attack upon Leith.

We think it proper, at the very outset of our remarks upon Scott's novels, to notice a delusion under which all his commentators, or "illustrators," as they have been pleased to call themselves, seem hitherto to have laboured; and which would be actually amusing, were the results not at the same time somewhat provoking. Because Scott has chosen to avail himself of the occurrences of actual history in the construction of his tales, and frequently to introduce strokes of real individual portraiture in them, these writers seem to have taken up the idea that the whole of his scenes and characters must have been copied from actual existence. Accordingly, there is scarcely a house, a man, or a landscape, introduced in his novels, to which they have not assigned some particular and *exclusive* identity of situation, individuality or locality. In short, their great aim would appear to be to make him a mere copyist, and to impute the whole merit of his production to the readiness of his observation and the retentiveness of his memory. These men seem not to have had capacity enough to perceive that all the principal and almost all the minor characters, as well as scenes, in these novels, are really beings and things of Scott's own creation;—

although all the while perfectly consistent with nature. He has freely inserted grafts from every stock by which he could increase the beauty of the blossom or the richness of the fruit; but the trunk of the tree was solely of his own rearing. In the work under consideration, for instance, the castle of Tully Veolan has by one "illustrator" been set down as the prototype of the Lord Advocate's (Jeffrey's) abode at Craigcrook, within a mile and a half (north) of Edinburgh, while by another it is represented as literally taken from Traquair House in Peebleshire. Again, the Baron of Bradwardine is by many reckoned an exact copy of the old gentleman already mentioned; while others identify him with Lord Pitsligo of Aberdeenshire, who bore the same rank in Charles's army, which Scott assigns to the baron, and who actually had for the supporters of his arms *two bears proper*. Davie Gellatley, too, has been generally set down as the *alter ego* of a crazed being called "Daft Jock Gray," belonging to Gilmanscleugh, the scene of one of the Ettrick Shepherd's ballads; while there is scarcely a village in Scotland, we believe, which does not boast of an equally authentic prototype.\* Nay, it is said that the original of Bailie Mac Wheeble has been so clearly recognised, that there are advocates (bar-risters) still living, who remember receiving fees from him!—certainly as probable as interesting a point of recognition.

Those individuals must have a very imperfect notion of Scott's genius who examine his writings in this manner. That he borrowed touches of description and character from most, if not all, of the above places and personages, we have reason to believe; but it was the singular power of Scott's mind, that while he drew materials indiscriminately from every source within his reach, he confined his descriptions of scene and character to no one individual person or locality. A common novelist, in placing before his mind an actual scene or individual as a

\* Mr. Chambers, who was the first to draw a parallel between Davie and Jock, has, since the text was written, candidly informed us, that Scott afterwards personally assured him he had never seen or heard of Jock Gray, until the publication of his (Mr. C.'s) book. The discernment displayed by that gentleman in his "illustrations," (a very juvenile production,) in which he hit upon the *actual originals* of several of Scott's characters, is astonishing; and as he wrote it when the whole world was upon the *qui vive* to obtain some cue to the "Great Mystery," even his mistakes do not warrant us to include him amongst the host of notable illustrators who followed him, alluded to in the text. We have been much amused by the examination of another work professing to be of the same character, recently published in two volumes by a London house, in which almost the whole of Mr Chambers's volume has been pressed into the compilation, word for word, without the slightest acknowledgment of obligation! The editor, or editors, moreover, seem to have entirely overlooked Scott's notes to the recent edition of his novels, in which he has blown into the air many of the airy speculations and fanciful conjectures, which they have again so faithfully reprinted!



subject of portraiture in one place, is unable to divest himself of the image of the original ever afterwards, and generally makes his subject as literal a *double* of it as the painter who is set to copy a particular landscape or countenance. It was the grand triumph of Scott's genius, that he could amalgamate, as it were, the peculiarities of many individuals in a single character. In Captain Waverley, for instance, we find him drawing an exact picture of himself, in the account he gives of his hero's desultory course of early reading; in a subsequent part of the novel the same person starts forward as the representative of old Invernahyle; and yet in this clashing together of different characteristics and adventures in the same individual, all is perfectly in keeping with human nature, and formed into a consistent and probable whole. We have often thought, indeed, that there was a similitude of manner in the construction of his characters with that of his mansion at Abbotsford, in which there is to be found a gate-way from Linlithgow, a roof from Roslin, a chimney-piece from Melrose, a postern from the Heart of Mid-Lothian, &c.; but blended together, certainly, with somewhat more deference to the rules of modern taste than is exhibited in that *selecticism* in architecture.

We confess we have never been able to perceive in what the great superiority generally assigned to "Waverley" over the succeeding novels consists; and suspect very much that the novelty and freshness of the descriptions of Highland scenery, with the interesting associations connected with the era of the tale, has tended much to beguile readers into an exaggerated opinion of its merits. There is none of his novels in which there is such a remarkable contrast of style between any of their various parts as is to be found in the beginning and conclusion of "Waverley." The introductory chapters are evidently written with great care and deliberation, filed and polished to the uttermost. Yet there is nothing stiff or pedantic; and although entirely destitute of enlivening incident, there is a quiet dignity in the narrative, an elevated tone of diction, and a polished and gentlemanly current of humour, which is to be found in no other part of his romances. In short, we look upon these preliminary chapters as the finest model of composition, in the same line of writing, in the English language; and Washington Irving has evidently taken them as a pattern in his "Bracebridge Hall," and others of his more admired writings.

The subsequent parts of the novel again, after the hero's arrival at Tully-Veolan, are thrown together with comparative looseness, and too evident unpremeditation; and Scott himself confesses, that in none of his other works has he been so far guilty of the sin of carelessness, and modestly observes that, on this account, it was by no means worthy of the success it met with. The hero and the heroine (if we may term

Rose Bradwardine the latter,) although amiable enough persons in their way, are comparative ciphers, whether as respects their individual character, or their connection with the story. Vich Ian Vohr is just such a polished, brave, fiery and ambitious chieftain, as we might be led to suppose from history presided over almost every clan in the Highlands at the above period. His sister is a character which we reckon it impossible, despite of her harp, her legends, her poetry and her raven locks, any one can admire or sympathise with, until she is seen making her brother's winding sheet in the gloomy apartment at Carlisle. There is something disagreeably repulsive and unfeminine in this portrait, and one feels all along a sort of malicious wish to see the haughty pride and selfish ambition of herself and her brother humbled, if not punished,—and fearful, indeed, is the chastisement which at last overtakes them in the pursuit of their vain-glorious dreams. We question if there is in all Scott's novels, or any where else, a scene more fearfully, because so hopelessly, pathetic, than that in which Flora, while describing to Waverley how often she had contemplated the possibility of such a downfall to their hopes, and thought she had fully prepared herself for the worst, yet confesses how far all her anticipations had fallen short of the "*unimaginable bitterness of that hour!*" The whole of this tragic part of the story is drawn with terrible power. The calm despair of Flora—the undying loyalty and manly firmness of Mac-Ivor—the devoted fidelity of Evan Dhu, scorning to avail himself of the compassion of his judges, and entreating that the lives of himself and half a dozen more of his clan might be taken in lieu of that of their chieftain—the gloomy prison—the preparations for execution—all are depicted with fearful truth and effect.

The noble old baron is, we are inclined to think, one of the happiest conceived and best sustained of all Scott's characters. He is the same perpendicular, formal, pedantic, snuff-taking, Frenchified, kindly and polished old gentleman and soldier, in every scene, and under all varieties of circumstances and situation,—whether presiding over the hospitalities of Tully-Veolan with his *poculum potatorium*—reading the church-service to his troopers before the battle of Prestonpans,—or lying amongst his pease-straw in the cleft of the sandy rock. We think, however, he is placed in rather an unworthy situation at the conclusion. The stately old man was no fitting object of charity—by which means, or something like it, he regains possession of his estate, goods, and chattels, including the *poculum potatorium* itself, which, by the way, is recovered in a sufficiently apoeryphal manner. He ought to have enjoyed indemnity both in person and estate for some act of generosity or mercy during his short campaign; and we have often regretted that the author transferred the credit of saving the English offi-

cer's life from what we may term the real to the fictitious personage. But there is, indeed, too much crowding and huddling together of incidents and circumstances towards the end of the novel, and we get perplexed with the manœuvring about the restoration of the estate,—the fine-drawn delicacy of Colonel Talbot, and all the circumstantiality of details, from the gilding of Waverley's new coach and six, to the corpulent condition of Ban and Buscar. Every thing is just made too perfect, and suggests, as the old baron himself remarks, the idea of brownies and fairies in the realization of *the denouement*. The introduction, too, of the painting of Fergus Mac-Ivor and Waverley, is rather a modish idea, and, in histrionic phrase, seems too palpably to be *got up for effect*. In short, on shutting the book, one cannot help wishing, with Chateaubriand on a somewhat more solemn and important occasion, that the author "had rested a little sooner."

In Davie Gellatley we have one of the happiest specimens of Scott's tact of mingling the result of homely observation with his power of creative fancy; and of interweaving the ludicrous and the pathetic in a manner altogether his own. The general outline of the character is that of many a village fool besides Davie in the bounds of Scotland, but the author finely contrives to interest our feelings in his behalf, and also to account for his poetical turn, by the short tale of domestic misfortune he has connected with his history. "The poor creature had a brother," said Rose, "and Heaven, as if to compensate to the family Davie's deficiencies, had given him what the hamlet thought uncommon talents. An uncle contrived to educate him for the Scottish kirk, but he could not get preferment, because he came from our *ground*. He returned from college, hopeless and broken-hearted, and fell into a decline. My father supported him till his death, which happened before he was nineteen. He played beautifully on the flute, and was supposed to have a great turn for poetry. He was affectionate and compassionate to his brother, and followed him like his shadow, and we think that from him Davie gathered many fragments of songs and music unlike those of this country. But if we ask where he got such a fragment as he is now singing, he either answers with wild and long fits of laughter, or else breaks into tears of lamentation; but was never heard to give any explanation, or to mention his brother's name since his death."

It is by such little touches as these that Scott contrives to invest with deep interest a character which would be disagreeable, if not revolting, to the feelings of humanity, in common hands. For, barring the short tale of pathos thrown into the sketch, Davie is otherwise exactly the sort of half-idiot, half-knave that is to be found (to the disgrace of our nation to be told) going at large in every town, and almost every ham-

let in Scotland. He bears not the slightest affinity to those jesters so common at one period in the families of our nobles, and with whom he seems most absurdly to be confounded by various commentators on these novels. The woof of wit is but sparingly interwoven with the web of his folly; and although his madness is regarded by the villagers with much the same sort of suspicion as the dumbness of the monkeys is said to be by the negroes in the West Indies, who think that the defect is only assumed by the cunning quadrupeds that they may not be compelled to work with their "fellow niggers,"—this is the ebullition of mere envy at the superior comforts he enjoys, compared with themselves. "He was in truth," says Scott, "the half-crazed simpleton he appeared;" although Davie probably entertained no such derogatory idea of his faculties. In fact, these innocents are generally the first to laugh to scorn any imputation upon their soundness of intellect.\*

After the popularity of "Waverley" had set in with so strong a current as to bear down every thing like criticism upon it as a work of fiction, it became fashionable among these dictators of public taste to accuse the author of violating historical accuracy in his narrative, and of drawing the characters of the Adventurer and others of the Stuart cause in too favourable a light. In the notes to the late edition of the work, Scott has effectually cleared himself of this imputation, by quoting at large the authentic sources of his information; and shews his only departure from fact is in appropriating to fictitious characters various incidents

\* The following is an amusing case in point, illustrative of this consciousness of mental superiority affected by many of these unfortunate beings. All our readers belonging to "Auld Reekie," will recollect well the poor fatuous creature called "Daft Jamie," who ultimately became one of the victims of the notorious Burke and his accomplices. Perhaps they will also remember another of the same kidney, named "Bobby Auld," whose confirmation of visage and cranium bore such a remarkable resemblance to those of the monkey tribe, to whom, besides, he seemed to have some affinity in the craftiness and trickiness of his disposition. Once on a time these two personages "foregathered" in the Grass-market, when the following scene took place—"A cauld day this, Bobby,—div'n ye think we wud be the better o' a dram?" "Aye, Jamie, but how are we to get it?" "I've got tippence, Bobbie,—what have ye?" "I've just tippence, too, Jamie, so we'll can get a half-mutchkin." Accordingly they adjourned into a tippling-house for this purpose, and while the landlord was drawing the liquor, Bobbie observed—"I say, Jamie, did ye see the dogs fetchin', as ye cam' in?" "No, Bobbie," answered the simpleton. "O', man, it's a grand fecht, continued his cunning companion, "Ye should go out and see it till the whiskey comes, or it'll a' be o'er. Jamie accordingly went out, but no fight could he see, and upon his return, found that Bobbie and the contents of the half-mutchkin stoup had vanished in the interim, leaving him with his "tippence" to settle the reckoning. The good-natured landlord, of course, only laughed at the circumstance, but observed to Jamie that he would surely thrash Bobbie when he met him for cheating him so. "Ou, what can I say to Bobbie, puir chield," answered the innocent with a smile of compassion—"Ye ken he's daft!"

which actually happened in real life. As for instance, in the case of Invernahyle, and the near escape which Flora Mac-Ivor made from the ball of the Highlander's musket. The last-named incident actually befell a Miss Nairne, with whom Scott says he was well acquainted. As the Highland army rushed into Edinburgh in all the extravagance of joy consequent on the recent victory at Preston, Miss Nairne, like other ladies who approved of their cause, stood waving her handkerchief from a balcony, when a ball from a Highlander's musket, which was discharged by accident, grazed her forehead. "Thank God," she exclaimed, the instant she recovered, "that the accident happened to me, whose principles are known. Had it befallen a Whig, they would have said it had been done on purpose."

Scott says—"Among other unfounded reports, it has been said, that the copy-right of "Waverley" was, during the book's progress through the press, offered for sale to various booksellers in London, at a very inconsiderable price. This was not the case. Messrs. Constable and Cadell, who published the work, were the only persons acquainted with the contents of the publication, and they offered a large sum for it while in the course of printing, which, however, was declined, the author not choosing to part with the copy-right."

"We have said that "The Lord of the Isles" appeared only a month or two after the publication of "Waverley." This by many was held decisive as to their being from different pens; and the disbelief was confirmed by Scott's name being affixed to various other works which came out during the same year. In fact, it appeared, naturally enough, preposterous to suppose that an author who had for many years been unremittingly pouring forth works of such magnitude to the public, could possibly have found leisure amidst such a multiplicity of avocations to achieve a composition so remarkably striking and original as that of "Waverley." One of his other works, published in 1814, was an edition of Swift's writings in nineteen volumes, with an elaborate memoir of his life.

It seems unaccountable how the name of Swift has been invested with such a consequence in the annals of English literature as seems universally to be conceded to it. He has left behind him no work of historical, or even general literary, importance. All his writings seem to have been undertaken as a pastime, or to serve some political purpose. Neither was he by any means a profound scholar, and in fact he ridiculed those of his contemporaries who aspired to that character. That he was a man of uncommon talent, and distinguished perhaps above any preceding or cotemporary writer for originality of ideas, is certain; but he appears to have disdained the cultivation or exercise of his faculties farther than was necessary to serve some immediate end, and made

no secret of his contempt for literary fame. Perhaps it is this latter quality which has procured his memory such universal respect; for it is a well-proven fact, that there is no surer passport to a literary reputation, than to affect perfect indifference on the subject. Swift's great forte was his wit, or perhaps we should rather say his *irony*, of which there occur examples in his "Gulliver's Travels," "Tale of a Tub," "Argument against abolishing Christianity," "Proposal for eating Irish children," &c. that have no parallel in any age or writer.

Upon the whole, however, the originality of Swift's character—his singular domestic history—his patriotic political efforts—and his intimate correspondence with Pope, Gay, Arbuthnot, and other remarkable authors and public men of Queen Anne's reign, render his biography one of the most amusing and remarkable in the cycle of our literature; and Scott executed his task with such industry, vigour and judiciousness, as at once to place his work as the standard one above all the other memoirs and collections of the Dean's writings that had previously appeared. The speculation was rather a heavy one, it is true, in his publisher's (Mr. Constable's) hands, and for the same reason as was the "Life of Dryden"—namely, its enormous price; being at the rate of £9 19s. 6d., plain octavo, and £15, 4s. royal. It is certainly much to be regretted that these admirable biographical sketches and other fugitive prose writings of Scott have never yet been published at such a price and in such a form as to bring them within the chance of general popularity.

In the same year, (i. e. 1814,) Scott lent his popular name to a publication (in two vols. 4to.) called "Border Antiquities," consisting of engravings of the principal objects associated with the traditions of antiquity on both sides of the Border, with descriptive letter-press; for which he also wrote an elaborate introductory essay. This was a work after Scott's own heart, and for which he was admirably adapted. As its object, however, is chiefly addressed to the amusement of tourists and antiquaries, this circumstance, with the material accompaniment of expensiveness, seems to have prevented its ever being very generally known or read.

In addition to the above productions of 1814, Scott also contributed a most learned and ingenious antiquarian essay to a work entitled "Illustration of Northern Antiquities," published under the charge of Robert Jamieson, Esq. of Edinburgh, and the late Henry Weber. The title of the essay was "Abstract of the Eyrbyggja-Saga," being the early annals of that district of Iceland lying around the promontory called Snaefells. The work in which it appeared contained much curious information on the subject of Scandinavian Antiquities, and was intended

to be continued in parts ; but it was dropped for want of encouragement,

We thus find Scott appearing before the public as a poet, a novelist, a biographer, a commentator, and an antiquary—embracing a range of no less than six and twenty volumes—all in the course of one year ! a circumstance which exhibits a fertility and universality of genius, and a facility of composition, in the same individual, which is, we believe, perfectly unparalleled. And all this, too, be it observed, the work of one who never appeared to his friends to be busy, but still kept his place as a social member of society ; a great part of whose time was necessarily occupied in the court of session ; who was busying himself with extensive agricultural improvements ; and who even found leisure to take a trip of a couple of months to the Highlands ! We observe, moreover, that he was at the same time throwing off occasionally little poetical pieces on various subjects. Amongst these was his well known “Song for the the Anniversary Meeting of the Pitt Club of Scotland,” for that year.

“O dread was the time and more dreadful the omen,  
When the brave on Marengo lay slaughtered in vain,” &c.

which, although few may *now* agree with the sentiments of panegyric conveyed in it, comparatively with the period at which it was penned, all must acknowledge to be one of the most powerfully written of Scott’s numerous lyrics.\*

\* The first meeting of this club was held on the 28th May, (anniversary of Mr. Pitt’s birth,) 1814 ; and we find Scott’s name among the office-bearers. He composed another song for the occasion, which was likewise sung. As the latter is in a very different style from the above, or indeed that of any of his other lyrics, and as we believe it is not at all known, (at least we never met with it in any collection of Scott’s poems,) we are induced here to give a specimen. It is to the old Scottish tune of “For a’ that and a’ that.”

“Tho’ right be aft put down by strength,  
As man a day we saw that,  
The true and leafu’ cause at length  
Shall bear the gree for ‘a that.’  
For a’ that and a’ that  
Guns, guillotines, and a’ that,  
The Fleur-de-lis, that lost her right,  
Is queen again for a’ that.

“The Austrian vine, the Prussian pine,  
(For Blucher’s sake, hurra that,)  
The Spanish olive, too, shall join,  
And bloom in peace for a’ that.

It may be believed, from the great popularity of *Waverley*, that Scott had few misgivings respecting the propriety of following up the same course, and as his mind was richly stored with all the necessary materials, he seems to have laid a new vessel on the stocks without loss of time.

The source whence Scott derived the rudiments of his next tale, was one which only a mind like his, ever agape for information, whatever wind might blow it, and strongly predisposed to the marvellous, would ever have dreamt of availing itself of. A writer of an ordinary cast of genius, whose object it must be to please the higher and middle classes of society, (and to these Scott's readers may be said to have been as yet entirely confined,) would probably have dreamt as soon of applying for a fashionable suit of clothes to the nearest scarecrow, as of drawing the means of furnishing an entertainment for the titled and wealthy from the superstitious hallucination of an old, tippling, though honest, menial. But Scott was too earnest a hunter after information to despise any communication of interest on account of the vulgar or common-place medium through which it reached him. In our old Scottish phrase, "he had a crap (stomach) for all sorts of corn," by whatever hand it was scattered; and, as an acute critic once said of him, it seemed to be the peculiar and admirable property of his mind, to digest all its food into *healthy chyle*. Indeed he has somewhere himself told us that he was never yet placed in any situation, or in any company, however dull, from which he could not extract something amusing at the time or useful to him afterwards. And so might all men say, did they condescend to pick up the materials of gratification and instruction which lie profusely scattered in the most common paths of life. But the generality of minds are too reserved, or haughty, or indifferent, to stoop down for these; and therefore is it we find so many who travel from Dan to Beersheba, and say "all is barrenness."

It was from John Mackinlay, an old servant of his father, (and whom we noticed almost at the outset of our memoir,) that Scott heard the marvellous tale which suggested to him his next work, "*Guy Mannering*,"—and the original story is certainly a novel and striking one, resem-

Stout Russia's hemp, so surely twined,  
Around our wreath we'll draw that,  
And he that would the cord unbind  
Shall have it for his gra-vat!"

We offer these verses as a favourable specimen of this effusion,—from which one might almost be led to suspect, that Scott at that time became ambitious of attaining distinction on the Parnassian heights of the High Street, or among the Arcadian bowers of the Cowgate!"



bling, indeed, one of good John Bunyan's pious and metaphysical allegories, rather than an old superstitious Scottish legend. It is as follows,—and old Mackinlay, be it observed, believed in the truth of it all, most religiously.

Once on a time, a grave and elderly person was benighted while traveling through the wilds of Galloway, and with difficulty found his way to a gentleman's seat, where he was hospitably admitted. Considerable confusion prevailed throughout the household, and the owner apologised to the venerable stranger for any omission of courtesy he might experience, as his lady was then in the pangs of child-labour. The old man, upon this intimation, although disclaiming the profession of an astrologer, desired to be shown into an apartment where he might have a view of the heavenly bodies, and promised to cast the nativity of the child. He was accommodated with a suitable apartment accordingly, and spent the greater part of the night making his observations, when at a certain hour he sent for the parent, and conjured him to cause the birth to be retarded but for five minutes, were it practicable. This, however, it was found impossible to do; and the child was born at the ominous moment. The astrologer then told the anxious parent, that by a singular conjunction of the planets, the child, (a boy) would be subjected to the operation of an evil influence about his twenty-first birthday, which would be the crisis of his fate; and that if he conquered it, his life would be a long and happy one. He advised him to be bred up in the strictest principles of religion and morality, and preserved from all contamination with the world. It was ultimately agreed upon betwixt them, that when the unhappy crisis approached, the youth should be sent to pass the ordeal that awaited him at the house of the sage, which was situated in the south of England, and of which he gave the address. Time rolled on: the child sprang up into boyhood—from boyhood to adolescence. The utmost care was taken, as advised, with his education; none but the most pious people were allowed to be near him; and his father was blessed in seeing him become all that a parent could wish. But as the youth began to approach the term of manhood, a remarkable change came over him. He became moping and melancholy, sleepless and nervous, and both his mental and bodily powers seemed to be giving way, without any apparent cause. The sage, being written to respecting these alarming symptoms, stated, that this fitful state of mind was but the commencement of the youth's trials. That he was suffering from the awakening of the passions, which he must be left to subdue in his own breast, in order to work out his preservation from certain and eternal destruction. The young man, meanwhile, combated to the uttermost with his own feelings, but he seemed to be sinking daily into the depths of madness or despair. At last the

period arrived for his departure to the sage's mansion, and as this was the first time of his being allowed to go forth alone into the world, he lingered so long by the way, gazing at all the novelties he saw, that it was in the afternoon of the day preceding the night of his birth ere he arrived at his destination—an antiquated and solitary old mansion. The sage received him with affection, but reproved him for his delay, which he said would increase the terrors of the coming night. As the hour of rest approached, the fated youth was made to perform his ablutions; and after partaking of some food of the simplest kind, was led by the astrologer into a remote apartment furnished only with a lamp, a chair and a table, on which lay a Bible. After solemnly conjuring the youth to hold fast by his religious principles, and keep steadfastly before his mind the great truths and promises of the word of God, the sage retired; and scarcely was the door closed when the recollection of all his sins of omission and commission rushed into the youth's mind, like a swarm of demons determined to lash his soul to madness. As he combated with these horrible sensations, he became aware that his arguments were answered by the sophistry of another, and that the dispute was no longer confined to his own thoughts. The Author of Evil was present in the room with him in bodily shape, laying before him his sins in all their darkest colours, and urging suicide as the readiest mode of escaping from the misery of his thoughts. As the fated and influential hour rolled on, the terrors of the hateful presence grew more confounding to the moral sense of the victim, and the knot of the accursed sophistry more and more inextricable. He had no power to explain the assurance of pardon from on High, or name the name in which he trusted. But his faith did not forsake him, and he resisted the Tempter until the clock told the lapse of the fated hour, when the demon retired yelling and discomfited. The young man was afterwards married to the sage's daughter, a beautiful girl, whom he had seen the previous evening, and the thoughts of whom had co-operated not a little with Satan's sophistry in distracting his thoughts from the contemplation of divine truth; and all, of course, ended happily.

This is more than a mere superstitious legend; it contains, we have said, a fine moral; or rather religious, allegory, which might be wrought up with terrible effect into a drama by some of the masters of the German school, where the immediate agency of imps and devils, in influencing the fate of mortals, is still reckoned legitimate. We can conceive it to have made a fearful and indelible impression on Scott's young mind; and he tells us, that the idea of constructing a tale out of the incidents of the life of a doomed individual, baffled all his efforts at good and virtuous conduct by some malevolent agent, but finally proving victorious in the struggle, long remained a favourite project with him:

may, that the first two or three chapters of the novel were written with this intention. As he proceeded, however, he became sensible, as we believe every one else will be, that the subject was by no means a fitting one for a popular tale, such as it was his purpose to write. Accordingly, he retained no more of the original tale than the incident of the casting of the horoscope; and even that, many seem to think, would have been as well dispensed with too.

From the purport of our preliminary remarks on "Waverley," it may be guessed, that we intend to enter into no minute and curious investigation respecting the originality of the scenes and characters introduced into its successor. They are avowedly part truth, part fiction—that is to say, six grains of the former to a bushel of the latter. But were we inclined to indulge our fancy, we could assign a much more definite identity to most of the persons, incidents, and scenes, in this work, than to those of almost any other of Scott's romances. The main locality is undoubtedly the northern banks of the Solway, somewhere between the mouths of the rivers Nith and Annan. We can suppose Mannering, after taking a sketch of the old castle of Torthorwald, and desirous probably of crossing the country in the nearest direction, towards the magnificent ruins of New Abbey, (or as termed of old, Sweetheart Abbey,) getting involved amongst the hags and flows of Lochar-moss; and by holding *vessel* instead of *cael*, arriving at the ancient castle of Caerlaverock, (or Ellangowan,) in place of the village of that name,—although at the present day, a wayfarer might as well alight at the one as the other, seeing that the wealthy and worthy proprietor of the domain\* will admit not a single Mrs. M'Candlish to draw change, or sell a stoup of creature-comfort on his whole barony,—a circumstance, which all hunters after the antique will do well to provide against. Scott mentions, indeed, that he has copied his description of the "Auld Place of Ellangowan" from the noble remains of Caerlaverock. The "New Place," however, has no representative at the present day, unless the small but comfortable abode of a worthy farmer, which stands close by, be taken as such. With respect to "Warroch Point," again, and the Bay, and the "Ganger's Loup,"

\* Mr. Constable Maxwell, younger brother of Mr. Marmaduke Maxwell of Torreggles, now claiming to be the representative of the ancient family of Nithsdale. The direct lineal male descendant of that noble house, however, (i. e. of the Lord Maxwell who escaped in such a remarkable manner from the Tower in 1715, when both title and estates were forfeited,) is understood to be William Maxwell, Esq. of Carruchan, whose elder brother, George Walter Maxwell, Esq. a young man of the highest promise, was drowned, while bathing in the Nith at Dumfries, some years ago—an event which spread almost universal sorrow over the whole south of Scotland.

all these are out of keeping with the scenery about Caerlaverock, where there is neither bay nor rock to be seen, and belong evidently to the wild and picturesque headlands about Colvenk, farther down the Solway. We know of no representative for "Portanferry;" and "Charlie's Hope," the hospitable mansion of the inimitable "Dandie," is evidently situated somewhere in the south, or south-east part of Liddesdale.

With regard to the living characters in the drama, again, there is the same admixture of reality and invention. Scott has since acknowledged,\* that the outline of the character of Meg Merrilies was taken from that of Jean Gordon, a renowned matron of the gipsy tribe, belonging to Kirk Yetholm in Roxburghshire, the head rendezvous in Scotland, for ages, of that wandering tribe. He afterwards gave a particular account of this heroine in one of a series of anonymous articles respecting the Scottish gipsies, which appeared in the early numbers of Blackwood's Magazine, (1817 we think); but the identity of their characters had been recognised by many long before the novelist himself divulged the fact; and the circumstance was frequently laid hold of by his friends, who, by means of abrupt questions and sly remarks, endeavoured to surprise him into an acknowledgment of the portraiture being the work of his hand. But Scott contrived to parry all such manoeuvres with the most admirable adroitness, and not unfrequently anticipated them by some general remark of his own. As respects the character of Meg, for instance, we have heard, that on one occasion, a few friends cunningly contrived to bring forward the resemblance betwixt Meg and the actual gipsy as a topic of discussion in Scott's presence, with the view of eliciting from him, either by word, tone, or look, some sign in proof of their suspicions. His perfect composure, however, entirely baffled them: and after seemingly a pause of rumination, he remarked, "Well, now, I would not be surprised if the author of the novel *really* had Jean Gordon in his eye when he drew Meg Merrilies."

Jean had a large family of sons, all of whom came in due course to their respective ends in some manner befitting their vagabond and freebooting mode of life. One of her sons was murdered by another gipsy named Johnson, who escaped the hands of justice for nearly ten years; but was afterwards apprehended, tried, and sentenced to execution. He contrived to escape, however, before the fatal day, and fled to Holland, but Jean tracked his steps with the steadiness and certainty of the sleuth-hound; he took refuge in Ireland, but there she also dogged him—had him seized, brought back to Jedburgh and hanged. A farmer

\* Introduction to the last edition, 1829.

in the neighbourhood, meeting her some time afterwards, observed,—“So, Jean, you have got Rob Johnson hanged at last!” “Aye, gude-man,” she replied exultingly, “and a’ that fu’ o’ gowd has na done it,”—holding up the corners of her apron with her two hands.

The rest of Jean’s sons, it is said, to the number of eight, were all condemned to die on the same day at Jedburgh,—for what crime we have never heard. The jury, it seems, were divided in opinion, and were debating among themselves, when one of them who had slept during the greater part of the previous discussion, suddenly awoke and exclaimed, “*hang them a’—hang them a’!*”—thus giving the casting vote for the condemnation of the criminals. Jean, who was present, only remarked, “The Lord help the innocent in a day like this!” Perhaps the *manner* of their death was the only consolation the poor woman had for this wholesale bereavement; for the gipsies, like the Highland cattle-lifters—or “gentlemen drovers,” as Evan Dhu Maccombish termed them—seemed to have regarded the gallows as any thing but a disreputable mode of exit.\*

The incident introduced into the novel, of Brown, or Bertram, being lodged and protected by Meg Merrilies in an old desolate building near Dorncleugh, was a real event in the history of Jean Gordon, and is detailed at length by Scott in the article in Blackwood’s Magazine before referred to. We shall give a more abridged version of it.

The tenant of Lochside, a farm near Yetholm, who had been always very kind to Jean and her tribe, had occasion to go to Newcastle to collect money to pay his rent. Upon his return through the Cheviot hills, he was benighted and lost his way. At last he espied a light glimmering through the *bole* of a lonely barn belonging to a ruinous and deserted suit of farm-offices, to which he directed his way and knocked for admission. The door was opened by Jean Gordon, whom there was no mistaking from her remarkably tall and commanding figure—being upwards of six feet high—and striking features—Jean set up a joyful shout of recognition, and insisted on the farmer dismounting and taking up his lodgings for the night—a request or com-

\* But what can this end in, were he (Donald Bean Leen,) taken in such an act of appropriation?”

“To be sure he would *die for the law*, as many a pretty man has done before him.”

“Die for the law?”

“Aye: that is, with the law, or by the law: be strapped up on the *kind* gallows of Crieff, where his father died, and his goodsire died, and where I hope he’ll live to die himself, if he’s not shot or slashed in a creagh.”

“You *hope* such a death for your friend, Evan?”

“And that do I e’en; would you have me wish him die on a bundle of wet straw in yon den of his, like a mangy tyke?”—See conversation between Waverley and Evan Dhu Maccombish.—Waverley, vol. i. p. 189, last edition.

mand which he had no means of disputing. Upon entering the barn he found Jean alone. She had been making great preparations for supper, and he observed that at least a dozen guests, of her own tribe doubtless, were expected. This was a dismal prospect to the poor farmer, who felt in imagination his cash—being almost every farthing he was worth in the world—slipping out of his pocket, if not the edge of a whinger across his throat. His fears seemed on the point of being realized sooner than he expected, for Jean instantly demanded what money he had about him? The question, however, proceeded from a very different motive than he at first suspected. In short, she insisted upon keeping his purse for the night, as the *bairns*, she said, sometimes got out of her guiding now-a-days, and neglected the old gipsy law of respecting the property of their benefactors. Her guest, scarcely half satisfied with this explanation, had no alternative but to surrender his cash, the whole of which she took with the exception of a few shillings, remarking that it would be suspicious were he found traveling altogether penniless. After giving him supper, she made him lie down, but it is needless to say he felt little inclination to sleep. About midnight the gang returned with their various articles of plunder, and the poor farmer heard them recount their achievements in language that made him shudder. They were not long in discovering that a stranger was in the dwelling, and demanded of Jean who he was. "E'en the winsome guid man of Lochside, puir body," she answered, "he's been away to Newcastle seeking siller to pay his rent, but deil-be-lickit he's been able to gather in, and sae he's e'en gaun hame again wi' a toom purse and a sair heart." Notwithstanding this explanation, and the earnest remonstrances of Jean, they searched the farmer's pockets, but finding only a few shillings in them, they thought the prize not worth appropriating: and after a hearty carousal, all lay down to sleep. At daybreak Jean roused her guest, and escorted him some miles on his road homewards; and at parting restored the whole of his money, nor would accept a farthing in return for her hospitality and fidelity.

In the same article, Scott tells us of a similar incident as the above befalling his own grandfather. He was riding over Charter-house moor, then a very extensive common, when he suddenly fell among a large band of gipsies. They instantly seized on his horse's bridle with many shouts of welcome, exclaiming (for he was well known to them) that they had often dined at his expense, and now he must stay and share their good cheer. "My ancestor," continues Scott, "was a little alarmed, for, like the good man of Lochside, he had more money about his person than he cared to risk in such society. However, being naturally a bold, lively spirited man, he entered into the humour of

the thing, and sat down to the feast, which consisted of all the varieties of game, poultry, pigs, and so forth, that could be collected by a wide and indiscriminate system of plunder. The dinner was a very merry one; but my relative got a hint from some of the older gipsies to retire just when

‘The mirth and fun grew fast and furious.’

and, mounting his horse accordingly, he took French leave of his entertainers, but without experiencing the least breach of hospitality. I believe Jean Gordon was at this festival.”

It is pleasing to find such sparks of the primitive goodness of our nature breaking out even through the veriest darkness of moral corruption and depravity. The behaviour of this poor woman at her death also displayed remarkable proofs of resolute fidelity and constancy of her principle; and the circumstances attending it, moreover, seem to have suggested to Scott, in his “Heart of Mid-Lothian,” (although neither he nor any of his numerous “illustrators” advert to the resemblance) the description of the last scene of Madge Wildfire’s pilgrimage on earth.

Jean was a keen politician and staunch Jacobite. Happening to be at Carlisle fair in the year 1746, the inhabitants of which town had then embraced the Hanoverian cause with as much readiness as they had opened their gates to the Highlanders in the preceding year, she openly taunted the rabble for their faithlessness in terms of bitter reproach. The infuriated mob seized upon her, carried her to Eden, and there ducked her to death. But the operation was no easy one, for Jean, although then old, was still a powerful woman, and as often as she got her head above the water, she shouted out in defiance of her murderers, “*Charlie yet! Charlie yet!*”

We shall have more to say, in a subsequent part of our memoir, respecting the singular people to whom Jean belonged, who, in the early part of the fourteenth century, overspread Europe like a land-flood, coming no one knew whence or why, and who have preserved the secret of their origin, and even of their mother tongue with such singular fidelity. We need only remark here, that their habits and appearance are not yet so much matter of history even in the Lowlands of Scotland, but that many will recognise from personal recollection the fidelity of our author’s description of them. We have already noticed that Scott recollected of seeing a grand-daughter of Jean’s, named Madge Gordon, in his childhood.

Respecting another of the characters in *Guy Mannering*—Dominie Sampson—we have already given, in an early part of our narrative, somewhat irregularly perhaps, the affecting outline of the original fur-

nished by Scott himself:—That he was actually tutor in the family of a gentleman of large but encumbered property and indolent disposition; that death swept off all the sons of the latter one by one; debts increased and funds diminished, until he was *rouped out*; and that he dropped down dead at the threshold, when about to remove from the house of his fathers, leaving an only daughter, now far advanced in life, penniless and unprotected. That the tutor, roused to the exertion of talents which he never before dreamt of possessing, opened a little school, and supported his patron's child for the rest of her life, treating her with the same humble observance and devoted attention, which he had used towards her in the days of her prosperity.

In the tutor of the novel, however, we find that, as in all his other characters, Scott has pressed in traits from more originals than one. The dress, demeanour, and circumstances of the Dominie at college, are the exact counterpart of those of hundreds of poor country lads taken by their parents from the plough-tail and the hirsle, who doom them to a probation of schooling and starvation, in the hope of one day seeing "their bairn wag his pow in a poopit." Those of our readers who have attended the university of "Auld Reekie," must be familiar with the appearance of many a Dominie Sampson, in as far as regards the outward insignia of rusticity and poverty. This is a species of ambition, we believe, peculiar to the peasantry of Scotland, and may be considered as at once a blessing and a bane to them.\* If it manifests a high and salutary state of moral feeling on the one hand, the result of it but too frequently terminates in entailing a burden of misery equally on the parents and the unhappy being, who, disappointed in all his hopes and struggles for preferment or employment in the way of his profession, has at the same time been rendered utterly unfit for resuming the homely labours from which he was unadvisedly taken—returning, in short, and lowering his ideas and deportment, to the humble duties of his original station. Many of our brightest ornaments in learning and science, it is true, have sprung from such a source, and it is the fatal error of the poor cottar that he looks only to these examples of successful genius, and flatters himself that his "own boy," for the sake of whose education he pinches and pares, rises early, and lies down late, eats dry bread, and drinks cold water, (to use the language of Scott,) is equally gifted by nature and disposition to prove a burning and shining light in his native land. There is much in all this that is to be regretted, in an individual sense, but there is also much that is pleasing and

\* Even to this day our rural population, like their fictitious but worthy representative, David Deans, regard a minister of the church as being an infinitely greater character than a landed proprietor, or indeed any other rank or profession whatever. And long may such a feeling obtain amongst them.



elevating, nationally speaking; and he must be a bolder speculator on the subject of human economy than we are, who would express a wish to see this feeling of ambition eradicated from the minds of our peasantry.

But to return to the case in point. If Scott drew the private history and outward condition of the *Dominie* from the sources above mentioned, we have pretty certain evidence of his being indebted to another original for his personal figure and appellation.\* This was a young man named James Sanson, son of James Sanson, tacksman of Berkhill-side mill, in the parish of Legerwood, Berwickshire; and his history is in the highest degree interesting and affecting. He received his early education at a country school, and afterwards attended successively the colleges of Edinburgh and Glasgow, where he became a profound classic scholar and metaphysician, and was equally distinguished for his retired and modest disposition. After being licensed, he was much admired as a preacher, but wanting interest to obtain him preferment, he was obliged to resort to the usual expedient of unpatronised divines—teaching—for a subsistence. Having saved the sum of twenty-five pounds, he conceived the idea of a pedestrian excursion into England, the greatest part of which he traversed; and happened to return by Harwich, the sight of the Dutch passage-boats tempted him to take a trip to the continent. He travelled through the Netherlands, and a great portion of Germany, and returned with fully two-thirds of his twenty-five pounds in his pocket. It is supposed that he had been maintained, during his peregrinations, chiefly by the hospitality of the convents. After his return he became tutor in the family of the Reverend Lawrence Johnson, minister of Earlstoun, (Erechildoun) and afterwards in that of Mr. Thomas Scott, uncle of the subject of our memoir, whose family then resided at Ellieston, in the county of Roxburgh. Whilst superintending the education of Mr. Scott's children, he was appointed to the charge of Carlenridge (or Caerlanrigg) chapel,† appertaining to the parish of Harwick. He still continued, however, to attend to the education of Mr. Scott's family during the week, and it was at this period he is supposed first to have been honoured with the denomination of *Dominie Sanson*, which he afterwards bore. The origin of that of the tutor in the novel will at once be perceived by our readers. The subsequent fate of this poor man was peculiarly unhappy. He accepted the office of chaplain to the tenants of the Earl of Hopetoun at

\* See "Chambers's Illustrations."

† The present holder of this charge is the Rev. Henry Scott Riddell, author of the "Songs of the Ark," and many of the most beautiful lyrics in our language; and who seems to have succeeded to the amiable simplicity and integrity of character, as well as the pastoral duties of his unfortunate predecessor.

the mines of Leadhills; the noxious effluvia of the mineral soon began to undermine his health, but his keen sense of duty made him persevere in his vocation. He first lost his teeth, next became totally blind, and death soon terminated all his earthly toils. He is said to have been a man of many amiable virtues; simple, manly, faithful and affectionate. In person, he seems to have been almost the exact counterpart of his prototype in the novel—huge and clumsy in his limbs, and ludicrously awkward in his motions; but those who knew him forgot the ungainliness of the casket in the preciousness of the jewel it contained.\*

The character of Dandie Dinmont affords another instance of Scott's singular power of throwing the individual characteristics of a whole community into one portrait. When the novel first came out, all Liddesdale was in a ferment, like a bee-hive in a sunny day, and much coy bantering took place among the "lads" respecting the individual amongst them entitled to the honour of representing the gudeman of Charlieshope. Perhaps we should rather say the *opprobrium*; for (will it be credited!) many amongst them, who thought the cap fitted themselves rather closely, absolutely expressed the highest indignation at being identified with a character which was in itself enough to redeem the ruined credit of a nation! General suspicion, however, attached to the late Mr. James Davidson, a tenant of Lord Douglas, as being Dandie's more immediate prototype, both from the striking points of resemblance in their personal qualities of blunt honesty, personal strength and hardihood, and from Davidson's being actually the owner of a family of terriers, of the generic names of Pepper and Mustard. Scott, in his late edition of the novel, so far acknowledges the truth of the conjecture, but observes, that there were, at least, a dozen of stout Liddesdale yeomen with whom he had been acquainted, and whose hospitality he shared in his rambles through that wild country, at a time when it was totally inaccessible save in the manner described in the novel, who might lay claim to identity with the rough but faithful, generous, and hospitable farmer. Mr. Davidson, Scott tells us, resided at Hindlee, a wild farm on the very edge of the Teviotdale mountains, and bordering close on Liddesdale, where the rivers and brooks divide as they take their course to the eastern and western seas. His passion for the chase in all its forms, but especially for fox-hunting, in the

\* Were we to imitate some of Scott's illustrators in drawing parallels between real and fictitious characters, from some similar traits or incidents in their history, we would find another original for the Dominie in no less a personage than Sir Isaac Newton! The circumstance of the Dominie's forgetting himself over a volume, when half-way up the ladder in the library at Woodburne, and standing there until the servant pulled him by the coat tail, and told him dinner waited, is taken from an anecdote of the same sort told by Swift of the great philosopher.

fashion described in the novel, in conducting of which he was skilful beyond most men in the South Highlands, was the distinguishing point in his character. When the tale on which these comments are written became rather popular, the name of Dandie Dinmont was generally given to him, which Mr. Davidson received with great good humour, only saying, while he distinguished the author by the name applied to him in the country—where the surname of Scott is so common—“that the sheriff had not written about him mair than about ither folk, but only about his dogs.”

If it appear surprising to any one how these natives of the mountain-wild happened to fix with such accuracy on the real author of the novel, while all the rest of the world were so far “abroad” on the subject, it must be kept in mind, that Scott was perhaps the first and only literary man of modern times at least, that had ever penetrated into their sequestered vales,—a circumstance of which they were well aware.

Scott tells us, that an English lady of high rank and fashion, being desirous to possess a brace of the celebrated Mustard and Pepper terriers, expressed her wishes in a letter, which was literally addressed to “Mr. Dandie Dinmont,” under which very general direction it reached Mr. Davidson, who was justly proud of the application, and failed not to comply with a request which did him and his favourite attendants so much honour.

In Mr. Davidson, we have one of the most curious instances on record of “the ruling passion strong in death.” This worthy man died in January 1820, after a long illness, during which he displayed the most sincere piety of mind and thankfulness for the religious counsel of the parish clergyman. One day, about three weeks before his death, the hounds of a neighbouring proprietor started a fox almost opposite his bed-room window. Although almost in extremity, his eyes glistered with pleasure the moment he heard the sound, and he insisted on getting out of bed to view the chase. With great difficulty he crawled to the window, and there saw part of the fun, as he termed it. When the clergyman called on him the same day, he said he had seen reynard once more, but had not seen his death. “If it had been the will of Providence,” he continued, “I would have liked to have been after him; but I am glad that I got to the window, and I am thankful for what I saw, for it has done me a great deal of good.” If there appears something in this incident incompatible with the thoughts proper to a death-bed—and he knew he was dying—the concluding remark ought almost to reconcile us to the circumstance, as implying a cheerful acquiescence in the great change that awaited him. None but a mind reconciled to such an event could have felt himself done “a great deal of good” to, by obtaining a glimpse of the amusements which constitu-

ted so great a portion of his earthly enjoyment, and which he was perfectly conscious he would never enjoy more.

Respecting Counsellor Pleydell, it is said that his likeness has been distinctly recognised in the person of the late Mr. Crosbie, once the most celebrated pleader at the Scottish bar; but, we confess, we are utterly unable to discover this alleged identity, in as far as we have been enabled to obtain information concerning the character of that eminent counsellor. Mr. Chambers, who confesses himself a proselyte to the above opinion, has, in his "Illustrations of the Author of Waverley," given a pretty full, and we believe accurate, sketch of the habits and history of that gentleman; but the narrative, in our opinion at least, establishes rather the dissimilarity than the identity of their characters. Mr. Crosbie seems to have been a regular nightly debauchee; even in the zenith of his fame, not unfrequently reeling directly from his cups to the court; and, upon one occasion, so far "left to himself," as to mistake the party by whom he had been employed, and absolutely plead the cause of his opponent. Pleydell is represented as being a man of a very different stamp; conforming somewhat, no doubt, to the jolly habits of the times, and occasionally playing at *high jinks* on a Saturday evening; but by no means a habitual toper; always shrewd, clear-headed, and ready for business; and the last man in the world likely to ruin himself by building a palace for a mansion-house, and launching into extravagances beyond his means of supporting, as his supposed prototype did. Crosbie was a man of great wit and humour, but almost solely of those kinds adapted to the sphere of his profession, or the revels of a tavern; those of Pleydell, on the other hand, were more fitted for the drawing-room. With the one, in short, dissipation was, if not natural, at least habitual to an inveterate degree; with the other, it was the exception, and not the rule, to his conduct; nor is there in his habits of thought or action the slightest trait indicating the probability of a consummation to his career, so dismal as that of the unhappy Mr. Crosbie,—reckless drunkenness, and its consequences—self-degradation, worldly contempt, poverty, starvation, disease, utter desertion, and death.\*

Mr. Chambers has, we think, been more successful in pointing out the original of Driver,"—not, however, in the person of Mr. Crosbie's Clerk, who, although of equally low and dissipated habits as he in the novel, is said to have been a man of fully as much legal knowledge, if

\* This unfortunate gentleman, who had been, but a few years before, the admired and courted of the first circles of rank, fashion, and learning in Edinburgh, was, it is said, so utterly deserted at his death, (in 1785,) that there was not a single friend or attendant near him to close his eyes; and that the only persons who attended his funeral were a few strangers hired from the public street.—Eheu!

not also as much genuine wit, as his employer—but in a sort of hanger-on of that personage, and denominated, from his close attendance on his tippling patron, his *Shadow*. We are told, it was actually true that this individual, like “Driver” in the novel, could write as well and as quick, drunk as sober,—asleep as awake; and it was one of his favourite jokes, that he meant to write out his will after death, and dispose of his legacies according to the demeanour of his relatives upon the occurrence of that *mournful* event.

Of the scoundrel Glossin we need say nothing. Unfortunately there are but too many prototypes of his character among the votaries of Themis even at the present day; and it is to be feared too many Ellangowans also for these worst of harpies to prey upon. We say this in all reverence to the *Faculty*, the character of which it would indeed ill beseem us to impugn. To adopt the language of Jonathan Oldbuck, “in a profession where unbounded trust is necessarily reposed, there is nothing surprising that fools should neglect it in their idleness, and tricksters abuse it in their knavery.”

“Guy Mannering” was rated by the critics much below its predecessor “Waverley,” on its first appearance. The story was less probable—the incidents less natural—the characters less distinctly painted—in short, it was altogether a very inferior production, but still observe, it was a work of *very considerable merit*. It is very easy to perceive the reason of all this. Books are seldom, now-a-days, judged of by their own merits, as in the days of Johnson, Addison, or Mackenzie. The language of modern criticism is chiefly relative, and consists almost solely in the instituting a comparison between the work in hand and some publication of the same nature which had previously been before the world, and upon which the public veto had been passed. When “Waverley” came out, therefore, these literary censors were at a loss what to say,—they had no previous standard to judge by, and like prudent men, they waited until the opinion of those whose taste they affected to direct should be heard. Their situation was a less uncomfortable one, and their course more evident, when its successor appeared. They had now an established precedent to judge by, and to work they went, drawing comparisons, and stretching parallels between the various incidents, scenes, and characters of the two books. The result of this mode of critical investigation could only prove, as we have stated it did, unfavourable. The personages in the second work were all of a much lower grade than those in Waverley. The critical exquisites could not brook the idea of being entertained with descriptions of the habits and adventures of gipsies, smugglers, fox-hunters, and such like scum of mankind; and reckoned it derogatory to their dignity to be introduced into such company.

Admitting, as we must do, that the novel is pitched in a somewhat

lower tone than "Waverley," we are yet ready to maintain, that in the main feature of it—the depicting of human character—it is, on the whole, scarcely inferior, and in some points superior, to its popular predecessor. There cannot be a more faithful, and therefore more melancholy, picture of human life, than the contrast presented between the youth and manhood of Mannering,—the gay, young, and sportive Oxford scholar, his imagination redolent of blissful anticipations of love and happiness, and his path of life stretched out before him in all the flattering hues of youthful enthusiasm—changed into the haughty and stern soldier, wealthy and renowned beyond almost his wishes, yet with all the early hopes of his heart blighted, and pursued by cankering sorrows which are "a perpetual aches in his cup of existence." In how many bosoms does not the picture find a similitude!

Julia, we confess, is no favourite of ours; and we readily give her up with all her flippant and ill-timed petulance to the castigation of the critics. Nor is Lucy Bertram a personage for whom we feel very warmly disposed to put our lance in rest. For both these ladies, however, every man who has mingled in general society can be at no loss to find many prototypes,—and so far the author is vindicated.

On the other hand, the faithful dominie, honest Dinmont, the spruce, witty, gallant, and sagacious Pleydell, the pompous Sir Robert Hazlewood, with his eternal triads—his deeming, and opining, and considering—all are master-pieces. We shall never forget the feelings of indignation on the one hand, and admiration on the other, with which we witnessed the respective personifications of the faithful and affectionate tutor by the great buffoon of the cocknies, Liston, and our own admirable Mackay. In the hands of the former the character was (as usual) that of a mere merry-andrew; not a single amiable trait of the original was brought out; all was grimace, and floundering, and absurdity. In Mackay, again, the awkwardness and absence of mind of the original are, as intended by the author, kept quite subordinate—a mere set-off to his better qualities. The scene in which the worthy creature declares his determination never to forsake the daughter of his "honoured master," whatever be her fate or her fortunes, is one of the most touching passages in all Scott's writings, and in the hands of our favourite actor it loses nothing of its pathos. "It is not the lucre—it is not the lucre (rejecting the proffered recompense for his services)—but that I, that have ate of her father's loaf, and drank of his cup, for twenty years and more—to think that I am going to leave her—and to leave her in distress and dolour,—No, Miss Lucy, you need never think it! You would not consent to put forth your father's poor dog; and would you use me worse than a messan? No, Miss Lucy Bertram, while I live I will not separate from you. I'll be no burden—I

have thought how to prevent that. But as Ruth said unto Naomi, 'Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to depart from thee: for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou dwellest I will dwell; thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death do part thee and me!'"

But there is perhaps nothing in this novel that demonstrates so strongly Scott's philosophical and seemingly intuitive knowledge of human nature, as in the concluding scene of the desperado Hatteraick's\* career. When reproached by Mac Morlan, for having concluded a life spent without a single virtue, with the murder of his accomplice Glossin, the wretch replies—"Virtue?—donner! I was always faithful to my shipowners—always accounted for cargo to the last stiver." He then occupies his last hour in writing a particular account of the fate of the vessel and other business matters to the mercantile house at Flushing, and thereupon deliberately hangs himself. This is a fine, though fearful illustration of the "soul of goodness in things evil."

The observations of Sir Robert Hazlewood of Hazlewood, baronet, (in whom we think we recognize the same original whom Allan Cunningham has gibbeted in his "Paul Jones"—it would be indelicate to surviving friends to speak more plainly,) respecting the encroachments of the democracy on the theretofore exclusive habits and privileges of their superiors, would seem rather more applicable to the present times than the period referred to in the novel.—"These are dreadful times, indeed, my worthy neighbour!—days when the bulwarks of society are shaken to their mighty base, and that rank, which forms, as it were, its highest grace and ornament, is mingled and confused with the viler parts of the architecture. O! my good Mr. Gilbert Glossin, in my time, sir, the use of swords and pistols, and such honourable arms, was reserved by the nobility and gentry to themselves, and the disputes of the vulgar were decided by the weapons which nature had given them, or by cudgels cut, broken or hewed out of the next wood. But now, sir, the clouted shoe of the peasant galls the kibe of the courtier. The lower ranks have their quarrels, sir, and their points of honour, and their revenges, which they must bring, forsooth, to fatal arbitrement!"

One of the principal objections to "Guy Mannering," was the astral agency introduced, and the faithful fulfilment of the mutual predictions of Mannering and Meg Merrilies, respecting the fate of young Bertram. Without attempting to vindicate the orthodoxy of judicial astrology, Scott, in his recent introduction to the novel, endeavours to justify the

\* This personage is supposed to be intended for a likeness of a famed smuggler, named Yawkins, who, about the same period, was the terror of all the revenue officers on the shores of the Solway.

employment of such agency, as being not only consonant with the general belief of the times referred to, but from the fact that the doctrine even at the present day retains some votaries. He mentions, in particular, a remarkable case of a late eminent professor of legerdemain, who constructed a scheme of his own nativity, calculated according to such rules of art as he could collect from the best astrological authors. The result of the past he found agreeable to what had hitherto befallen him, but in the important prospect of the future a singular difficulty occurred. There were two years, during the course of which he could by no means obtain any direct knowledge, whether the subject of the scheme would be dead or alive. Anxious concerning so remarkable a circumstance, he gave the scheme to a brother astrologer, who was also baffled in the same manner. At one period he found the native, or subject, was certainly alive; at another, that he was unquestionably dead; but a space of two years extended betwixt these two terms, during which he could find no certainty as to his death or existence. The astrologer noted the remarkable circumstance in his diary, and continued his exhibitions in various parts of the empire until the period was about to expire during which his existence had been warranted as actually ascertained. At last, while he was exhibiting to a numerous audience his various tricks of legerdemain, the hands, whose activity had so often baffled the closest observer, suddenly lost their power, the cards dropped from them, and he sunk down a disabled paralytic. In this state the artist languished for two years, when he was at length removed by death. "The fact, if truly reported," observes Scott, in reference to the preceding story—which is certainly quite as remarkable and incredible as that in the novel—"is one of those singular coincidences which occasionally appear, differing so widely from ordinary calculation, yet without which irregularities human life would not present to mortals, looking into futurity, the abyss of impenetrable darkness which it is the pleasure of the Creator it should offer to them. Were every thing to happen in the ordinary train of events, the future would be subject to the rules of arithmetic, like the chances of gaming. But extraordinary events, and wonderful runs of luck, defy the calculations of mankind, and throw impenetrable darkness on future contingencies." Scott also tells us in the same place that he had recently (date 1829) been honoured with a letter from a gentleman deeply skilled in astrological mysteries, offering to calculate his own nativity; but it was found impossible to procure the proper data for the construction of a horoscope.

But although our author thus seemingly avows his belief in the *possibility* of such secret influences, he was very far from being a proselyte to that faith which attributes to a special destiny every action and



incident of human existence; the tendency of which, were it once established, would utterly deprive man of that "free agency" which reason and religion alike assign to his character. No man was more sensible than he of the duty and efficacy of individual exertion in the construction of one's own fortunes; or that, in the language of the poet,—

"We are ourselves our own distress,  
We make ourselves our happiness."

Talking with his lady one day about an individual who had been remarkably fortunate in life, which circumstance the latter seemed inclined to impute mainly to luck,—“Ah, mamma!” replied Scott, (by which title he usually familiarly addressed her,) “you may say as you like, but take my word for it, ’tis skill leads to fortune.”\*

But we must pass on to another part of our subject.

We alluded, in a previous part of our narrative, to Scott's excursion to France in 1815, immediately after the battle of Waterloo, and to two works, one a poem, the other in prose, the result of that journey, and which were published the same year,—the first in his own name, the latter anonymous. Of the poem we have already spoken, as being a failure; but the prose volume was eagerly and universally read; and as it was pretty well known who was the writer, it led the public farther and farther astray, respecting the authorship of “Waverley” and “Guy Mannering,” the latter of which works appeared almost at the same moment.

“Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk,” for so was the work entitled, was well deserving of all its popularity, and presents in every respect one of the most pleasing contrasts which could be desired to the lucubrations of most of our modern tourists and travellers. It gives a most minute, yet lively account of the various classes of society in Flanders and France—their manners, occupations, institutions, buildings, agriculture,—in short, one would be led to suppose that the author had dedicated years of personal observation, study, and inquiry, to qualify himself for the undertaking. The plan of the work, too, is no less happily conceived than delightfully executed: the letters are addressed to several imaginary kinsfolk in Scotland, and the contents are varied so as to suit their different supposed tastes. For instance, his descriptions of the ladies, their dress, appearance, amusements, &c., are addressed “to his sister Margaret;” his observations on fortifications, stormings, battles, &c. are “to his cousin the Major;” his political retrospects and remarks are for the benefit “of his cousin Peter,” &c. We thus, as

\* This is exactly the *Kunst macht Gunst* of Aklobrand Oldbuck.

it were, have a different style of writing in almost every epistle, and the interest of the reader is kept delightedly alive to the very last. We have a clear and succinct view of the state of public parties and public feeling in France and the Netherlands, betwixt the periods of Bonaparte's abdication in 1814, and his meteor-like reappearance in 1815; and we may mention, by the way, that he points out in the most forcible manner the absurdity of that most impolitic measure of the allies—the union of Holland and Belgium. His observations on this subject are indeed so strongly prophetic of what has subsequently proved the result of the experiment, as well as so just and philosophic in a more general sense, that we cannot forbear quoting a few sentences. "I am no friend," he says, "to the modern political legerdemain, which transfers cities and districts from one state to another, substituting the 'natural boundaries,' (a phrase invented by the French to justify their own usurpations,) by assuming a river or a chain of mountains, or some other geographical line of demarcation, instead of the moral limits which have been drawn, by habits of faith and loyalty to a particular sovereign or form of government, by agreement in political and religious opinions, and by resemblance of language and manners; limits traced at first, perhaps, by the influence of chance, but which have been rendered sacred and indelible by long course of time, and the habits which it has gradually fostered. \* \* \* Either a general indifference to the form of government and its purposes has been engendered in those whom superior force has thus rendered the sport of circumstances; or, where the minds of the population are of a higher and more vigorous order, the forced transference has only served to increase their affection to the country from which they have been torn, and their hatred against that to which they have been subjected. \* \* \* It is certain, that this iniquitous habit of transferring allegiance in the gross from one state to another, without consulting either the wishes or the prejudices of those from whom it is claimed, has had the former consequences of promoting a declension of public spirit among the smaller districts of Germany. Upon the map, indeed, the new acquisitions are traced with the same colour which distinguishes the original dominions of the state to which they are attached; and in the accompanying Gazetteer, we read that such a city, with its liberties, containing so many thousand souls, forms now a part of the population of such a kingdom. But can this be seriously supposed (at least until the lapse of centuries) to convey to the subjects thus transferred that love and affection to their new dynasty of rulers, that reverence for the institutions in church and state, those wholesome and honest prejudices in favour of the political society to which we belong, which go so far in forming the love of our native country? 'Care I for the limbs, the thewes, the sinews of a man?—

give me the spirit!’ and when the stipulations of a treaty, or the decrees of a conqueror, can transfer with the lands and houses the love, faith, and attachment of the inhabitants, I will believe that such *arondissemens* make a wholesome and useful part of the state to which they are assigned. Until then, the attempt seems much like that of a charlatan who should essay to engraft, as a useful and serviceable limb, upon the person of one patient, the arm or leg he has just amputated from another.” We will only remark upon the preceding observations, that it is to be lamented how seldom the opinions of statesmen and the measures of governments are dictated by the wisdom accruing from a knowledge of human nature, such as manifested by the writer.

Scott’s description of the battle of Waterloo is at once the most minute and intelligible, and at the same time animated, that has ever been penned of it, or perhaps any other. And here we may observe, that we can scarcely imagine a finer contrast, or what better exemplifies the versatility of his powers, than is presented in his account of it and of “Flodden Field.” In the poem, writing as a poet, and of the chivalric times when individual prowess was almost the sole arbitrator of the field, he carries us headlong into the *melée*, and inspires us with all that reckless and heady enthusiasm which animated the living combatants on that “field of skulls.” In his description of the latter, though not less memorable engagement, he lays down the mutual preparations of attack and defence, and the disposition of the two armies, with all the mathematical precision of a modern military tactician; and we are made to regard the conduct of the whole battle—from the moment the clouds of Napoleon’s cavalry advanced to the charge from the heights of La Belle Alliance, to that when

“The desolator desolate,  
The victor overthrown”—

put spurs to his horse towards the village of Genappe—with all the coolness of observation which distinguished the bearing of the two great commanders themselves on that eventful day. Scott had taken the greatest pains to collect the most authentic information from the most authentic sources, consisting chiefly of the testimony of the commanding officers on both sides who witnessed, without being personally involved in, the hideous scene of carnage. His account of it, therefore, has all the recommendation of truth, enhanced by his imitable gift of description, and seasoned with many interesting individual incidents which his anxious researches enabled him to pick up. In other respects, the work is valuable in a historical sense, as giving a faithful picture of the internal economy of France and the Netherlands

at the above period, and the appearance, productions, population, commerce, &c. of the two nations.

"Paul's Letters" were, like Scott's other works, from "Waverley" downwards, published by Mr. Constable, with whom he had already commenced that pernicious system of *prospective* payment for his labours, by bills and otherwise, which, almost unavoidably giving rise to a course of reciprocal accommodation, ultimately involved him in the downfall of that great publishing establishment. Of this mode of transacting business, the work we have been speaking of is an instance. Scott had got into the full (and we make neither hesitation nor apology for adding, foolish) career of purchasing, planting, and building at Abbotsford, which, indeed, he had commenced almost immediately upon his removal thither.

In a letter to the Reverend T. F. Dibdin, dated "Abbotsford, by Melrose, 3d May, 1812," occurs a passage which demonstrates sufficiently the promptitude and enthusiasm with which Scott set about his improvements on his recent purchase. He says, alluding in the first place to the sale of the celebrated Roxburghe collection of books and documents, the use of which had been of such material service to him in his antiquarian labours, and which was brought to the hammer in the same month—"The Roxburghe sale sets my teeth on edge. But if I can trust mine eyes there are now twelve masons at work on a cottage and offices at this little farm which I purchased last year. Item—I have planted thirty acres, and am in the act of walling a garden. Item—I have a wife and four bairns, crying, as our old song has it, 'porridge ever mair.' So, on the whole, my teeth must get off edge as those of the fox with the grapes in the fable."

Like Jealousy—Scott's rage for possessing and *metamorphosing* (the only appropriate term we can think of, though somewhat at the expense of grammar) seemed to increase by what it fed on. Wing after wing was added to his house: plantation after plantation arose on his farm; and farm after farm was attached to his property. The value of the land which he thus became possessed of we have already noticed.\* In fact, his purchases were, to use a modish phrase, the *talk* of the whole district, and that neither measured nor complimentary: it became a popular observation among the rustics in that quarter, that they would wish for no ampler *fortune*, than "just the length and breadth o' themselves in land, within half a mile o' the shirra's house."

It may be imagined, therefore, that Scott was continually in need of money to prosecute his plans, and on these emergencies he resorted to Mr. Constable, who, acting as a sort of literary pawnbroker, took the

\* It has been calculated that the present estate of Abbotsford, which scarcely brings in 700*l.* a-year, must have cost the purchaser at least 50,000*l.*

author's talents and popularity in *pledge* for his advances in cash to him. It was thus that in 1815, soon after the news of the battle of Waterloo, Scott applied to Constable for a pecuniary accommodation, when the latter offered him 1000*l.* for some work upon that event. The proposition was agreed to, the money paid down, Scott set off to France, and the result was, the production of "Paul's Letters," and the accompanying poem entitled "Waterloo." Such is the history of these works, which we have got from what Allie Gourlay terms "a sure hand."

It would have been a blessing for all parties, had Mr. Constable been less accommodating to the author on these occasions; for it was assuredly the command of ready money which he thus possessed that induced him to launch out into those extravagant schemes which he carried into execution. But both author and publisher seemed equally intoxicated with the success of his works, and the nature of their dealings was perhaps without any parallel either in literature or commerce. Not to speak of the extravagant remuneration for books already before the world, and advances for books in progress, it afterwards appeared that large sums were granted for works, which, if ever contemplated, were at least *never written or even begun*. In the height of their apparent prosperity, Mr. Constable one day disclosed to a friend his own view of the way in which he stood towards Scott. "Scott," said he, with the humorous expression peculiar to him, "is just like Dr. Gillespie's cow. The cow was the first *milker* in the whole parish, but yet the doctor had to bring her to the market. 'Doctor, doctor,' said every body, 'what's making you sell your cow—her that gies sae muckle milk?' 'I'll tell ye that, may be,' answered the doctor, 'at the conclusion of the market.' Accordingly, having disposed of his cow, and jogging home in the evening with his neighbours, he was requested to explain his reason for parting with so valuable an animal. 'Ou, ye see, gentlemen,' quoth the doctor, 'there's nae doubt my cow was the best in the parish, so far as giving milk was concerned; but then ye maun tak' another thing into account—there was deil ane that needed sae muckle meat. First, ye see, she took her ain meat—then she took Bruckie's—and then she would hae Hawkie's—and after a' she wad roar for mair!' That," concluded the bookseller, "is Walter Scott."

But we have not yet arrived at the proper period for fully unfolding the pecuniary transactions between Scott and his publisher; and we will, in the mean time, say a few words respecting the private history of the latter, up to the period we are now speaking of.

Archibald Constable was born in the year 1778, at a hamlet on the skirts of Kelly Law in the "east neuk of Fife." His parentage was very humble, and his early education proportionately disadvantageous,

but having shown a decided turn for books, he was indentured with Mr. Peter Hill, bookseller in Edinburgh—the friend and correspondent of Burns, and who is still living—with whom he served his apprenticeship. About the beginning of the present century, he set up business for himself in an exceedingly small way.\* His shop formed part of the Royal Exchange buildings, next door to Allan's close, High street, exactly opposite the Cross—or “Mount of Proclamation,” as Hogg terms it in his Chaldee manuscript. It was at first a mere box of a place, but as his business and stock increased, he enlarged his premises by opening a communication with the tenements behind. He directed his attention chiefly to the collection of old and rare works,\* for which, indeed, he had an absolute passion, and this circumstance soon attracted to his premises the numerous hunters after the curious and antique with whom Edinburgh was then rife, including Leyden, Heber, Dalzell, Scott, &c. Of this, however, we have before spoken, as well as of his commencing law-stationer, in which branch of his trade almost his only source of profit for some time was in the sale of Heinneccius' Pandects to the law-students. While yet struggling with “poortith cauld,” he engaged the affections of the daughter of Mr. Willison, a wealthy printer in Edinburgh. This connection seems to have arisen through the medium of the Edinburgh Review, (started in 1802,) the publication of which Constable was lucky enough to obtain, and of which Mr. Willison was printer. The old gentleman discountenanced his addresses, but the young lady consulted her own inclination; and soon after the nuptial knot was tied, we believe, her parent became reconciled to the match, and, if we are rightly informed, gave his son-in-law considerable assistance in the world.† The publication of the Review, however, was the great means of helping him onward, and the little dingy premises became the *rendezvous* of almost all the literati

\* The sign above his door bore, in large characters, the words “Scarce Books.” Shortly after setting up, and when his stock was perhaps somewhat akin in value to that of the apothecary in Hamlet, the public were amused one morning on finding the preposition “of” inserted betwixt the adjective and substantive, (by some wag during the night,) thus advertising to the world that the Bibliopole was “Scarce of Books.” The joke was perhaps rather too just to be pleasant.

† Mr. Willison, who read all the proofs himself, was most rigid in his ideas of punctuation, and used to occasion the Reviewers no little annoyance from his finical particularity in that respect. A story is told of his having, on one occasion, sent to Mr. Jeffrey a second proof (technically *revise*) of a portion of one of his criticisms, with a note adhibited on the margin, “that there appeared something unintelligible in this passage.” Mr. Jeffrey returned the proof unaltered, but with a counter-note to the effect, that “Mr. Jeffrey can see nothing unintelligible in this passage, unless in the number of commas, which Mr. Willison seems to keep in a pepper-box beside him, for the purpose of dusting the proofs with!”

of Edinburgh. Our readers will perhaps recollect, that it was here the curious fanciful scene between the ideal Captain Clutterbuck, and the *Eidolon* of the author of *Waverley*, detailed in the captain's letter to the Rev. Dr. Dryasdust, which forms the original introduction to the *Fortunes of Nigel*, is represented to have taken place. As both Mr. Constable and his premises are particularly alluded to in this humorous epistle, we will extract the passage more immediately referring to them.

After alluding to the loss of an early and esteemed literary friend, the captain continues :—"To this great deprivation has been added, I trust for a time only, the loss of another bibliopolical friend, whose vigorous intellect and liberal ideas have not only rendered his native country the mart of her own literature, but established there a court of letters, which must command respect even from those most inclined to dissent from many of its canons. The effect of these changes, operated in a great measure by the strong sense and sagacious calculations of an individual, who knew how to avail himself, to an unhopèd for extent, of the various kinds of talent which his country produced, will probably appear more clearly to the generation which shall follow the present.

"I entered the shop at the cross, to inquire after the health of my worthy friend, and learned with satisfaction, that his residence in the south had abated the rigour of the symptoms of his disorder. Availing myself, then, of the privileges to which I have alluded, I strolled onward in that labyrinth of small dark rooms, or *crypts*, to speak our own antiquarian language, which form the extensive back settlements of that celebrated publishing house. Yet, as I proceeded from one obscure recess to another, filled, some of them with old volumes, some with such as, from the equality of their rank on the shelves, I suspected to be the less saleable modern books of the concern, I could not help feeling a holy horror creep upon me, when I thought of the risk of intruding on some ecstatic bard giving vent to his poetical fury ; or, it might be, on the yet more formidable privacy of a band of critics, in the act of worrying the game which they had just run down. In such a supposed case, I felt by anticipation the horrors of the Highland seers, whom their gift of deuteroscopy compels to witness things unmeet for mortal eye ; and who, to use the expression of Collins,—

—— "heartless, oft, like moody madness, stare  
To see the phantom train their secret work prepare.'

"Still, however, the irresistible impulse of an undefined curiosity drove me on through this succession of darksome chambers, till, like

the jeweller of Delhi in the house of the magician Bennaskan, I at length reached a vaulted room, dedicated to secrecy and silence, and beheld, seated by a lamp, and employed in reading a blotted *revise*, the person, or perhaps I should rather say, the *Eidolon*, or representative vision of the author of Waverley! You will not be surprised at the filial instinct which enabled me at once to acknowledge the features borne by this venerable apparition, and that I at once bended the knee, with the classical exclamation of '*Salve, Magne Parens*'! The vision, however, cut me short, by pointing to a seat, intimating at the same time, that my presence was not unexpected, and that he had something to say to me.

"I sat down with humble obedience, and endeavoured to note the features of him with whom I now found myself so unexpectedly in society. But on this point I can give your reverence no satisfaction; for besides the obscurity of the apartment, and the fluttered state of my own nerves, I seemed to myself overwhelmed with a sense of filial awe, which prevented my noting and recording what it is probable the personage before me might most desire to have concealed. Indeed, his figure was so closely veiled and wimpled, either with a mantle, morning-gown, or some such loose garb, that the verses of Spenser might well have been applied,—

"Yet, certes, by her face and phynomy,  
Whether she man or woman only were,  
That could not any creature well descry."

I must, however, go on as I have begun, to apply the masculine gender; for, notwithstanding very ingenious reasons, and indeed, something like positive evidence have been offered to prove the author of Waverley to be two ladies of talent, I must abide by the general opinion, that he is of the rougher sex. There are in his writings too many things,

'Quæ maribus sola tribuuntur,'

to permit me to entertain any doubt on that subject.

It is curious enough to observe the correct conception which Scott entertained of the mysterious feeling which pervaded the public mind respecting his own identity at this period, and the appropriate *shadowy* sort of language in which he speaks of himself.

In the above premises Mr. Constable continued until the year 1822—3, when he removed to that shop, No. 10 Princes Street, now occupied



as a coach-office. But his subsequent fortunes fall more properly to be noticed at a later part of our narrative.

We come now to Scott's third achievement in his unknown character, which came out early in the year 1816.

"The Antiquary" has been designated by its author as belonging to the same *class* of fictitious narratives as "Waverley" and "Guy Mannering;" in as far as being illustrative of Scottish manners during the last decade of the eighteenth century, as its predecessors were intended to exhibit them at two previous periods. As in them, too, but more particularly "Guy Mannering," the author selected his principal characters from among the humbler classes of society, who are the last to take on that polish which assimilates the manners of different nations. It may be questioned, however, if the change which took place in our national language, manners and character, during the space these works were meant to refer to (between fifty and sixty years) was so great as to admit of three distinct pictures being drawn of them. If it did, then it must be confessed that Scott has failed in presenting any striking contrast between the assumed eras, particularly between those of "Guy Mannering" and of the "Antiquary." Indeed, it appears to us, that the latter might, in this sense, have been the earlier work with perfect propriety; and, as far as the heroes are concerned, we question if Jonathan Oldbuck must not be reckoned a much more antiquated personage than Colonel Mannering. On the whole, we are inclined to suspect that Scott's fanciful classification of these novels was entirely an afterthought, and that he had no intention of so *systematising* them during their composition. It is, indeed, one of the chief causes of Scott's excellence, that he could bind himself down to no set rule either in the design or execution of his romances, but roamed at freedom through the thoroughfare of nature whether of scene or character, which change of circumstances may indeed modify, but can never entirely alter. And thus it is, that every attempt to draw a comparison between any two of his works has been found utterly vain. They belong to no school but that of nature, and are as various in their character as man himself.

"The Antiquary" did not immediately rise into popularity, (comparatively speaking, but, if we mistake not, it will stand the test of investigation with less danger from the captiousness of criticism, than almost any of its brethren. It is indebted to no adventitious help from uncommon and exciting scenes or incidents (if we except the adventure of Sir Arthur and Isabella on the sea-beach, and the death-scene of old Elspeth,) like "Waverley," or startling transitions of space and contrasts of scene and *grouping*, as in "Guy Mannering." All its interest lies in *character*. We never get beyond a few miles from the paltry

and uninteresting burgh of Fairport,\* and all the personages would seem at first much of a piece with the locality; but the author's knowledge of life—his power of analyzing the human heart, and bringing out the minutest shades of character and disposition, equally engage our feelings in the narrative, and convince our judgment of its reality. There is, in short, more just and sober moral delineation in the *Antiquary*, in our opinion, than in any other of his productions. It is said that it afterwards became Scott's own peculiar favourite, which predilection he testified upon the occasion of the sale of his manuscripts in 1832, when Captain Basil Hall became the purchaser of that of "*The Antiquary*," which was perfect, for the sum of £42. Meeting with Scott, accidentally, at Southampton, some time after, the latter alluded to the recent sale, observing that his friend had become possessed of his *most favourite novel*, and offered to add a few lines to that effect at the end of the MS. Captain Hall, it may be supposed, was not slow to avail himself of the kind offer, and the preciousness of the MS. has accordingly been enhanced an hundredfold by the addition of the short testimonial.

In none of the other characters of his works has Scott drawn so literally from individuals of real life, as in his Oldbuck and Edie Ochiltree—undoubtedly the principal personages in the novel. The former, he himself tells us, was at once recognised as being the prototype of George Constable, Esquire, of Wallace-Craigie, near Dundee,† whom he frequently speaks of with great veneration, and whom we have before noticed as having been the first who introduced him to Shakspeare. "I thought," says our author (in 1827,) "I had so completely disguised the likeness that it could not be recognised by any one now alive. I was mistaken, however, and indeed had endangered what I desired should be considered a secret; for I afterwards learned that a highly respectable gentleman,‡ one of the few surviving friends of my father, and an acute critic, had said, upon the appearance of the work, that he was now convinced who was the author of it, as he recognised, in the *Antiquary*, traces of the character of a very intimate friend of my father's family. I have only further to request the reader not to suppose that my late respected friend resembled Mr. Oldbuck, either in his pedigree, or the history imputed to the real personage. There is not a single incident in the novel which is borrowed from his real circumstances, excepting the fact that he resided in an old house

\* We must crave pardon for speaking thus lightly of "bonny Dundee," which is now a very different sort of place from what it was forty years ago.

† This gentleman was no relation of Mr. Archibald Constable.

‡ James Chalmers, Esq. solicitor at law, London, who died in 1831.

near a flourishing sea-port, and that the author chanced to witness a scene betwixt him and the female proprietor of a stage-coach very similar to that which commences the history of the Antiquary."

We have little to add to the above sketch, further than that Wallace-Craigie is within a mile or little more of Dundee, where Scott, when a young man, was a frequent visitor; and notwithstanding the disparity of age between the host and his guest, they seem to have entertained a strong mutual regard for each other.

The domicile of Mr. Constable has, we understand, fallen into decay since his death, and is now occupied by people of mean condition. We may also mention that the scenery along the sea-beach, towards Arbroath, corresponds exactly with the description given in the novel.

The original of Edie Ochiltree was at once detected by many individuals, to be an old mendicant, named Andrew Gemmels, well known in the Border districts during the latter half of last century, and of whose history there are preserved many entertaining anecdotes, in addition to those furnished by Scott himself in his introduction to the recent edition of the novel. It would appear that the novelist has been pleased to dignify him with the rank of "blue-gown" to suit his own fancy or convenience. Andrew had been a soldier in his youth, and fought at the battle of Fontenoy, (May, 1745,) and in personal appearance was the exact counterpart of Edie. The racy, sarcastic humour of the latter prevailed with even greater causticity in the original, and it would seem he was much more indebted to the general dread of that quality, than to the sentiments of charity or compassion towards him, for the hospitable reception he every where met with. We shall give one instance of his ready and satirical wit, which is highly characteristic of the individual. Andrew happened to be present at St. Boswell's fair in Roxburghshire, where a modern Sergeant Kite, (in the person of the late Mr. Dodds of the war-office,) was busy recruiting for fresh men for the American war. Dodds was a man of great eloquence, and after a due flourish of drums and fifes, used to harangue the multitude in glowing strains on the pleasures of a soldier's life, and the honour and glory of the military character. On the present occasion he was particularly brilliant, and had just concluded an oration in flaming heroics to a crowd of gaping rustics who were fast kindling into the temper of mind which he desired, when Andrew, who was standing close beside him, reared aloft his meal-pocks on the end of his pike-staff, and exclaimed with a tone and aspect of the most profound derision, "*Behold the end o't!*" The contrast between the *beau ideal* of Sergeant Dodds, and the reality of Andrew Gemmels, was irresistible; and the former retreated in confusion with his party amidst the universal laughter of the multitude. Andrew throve in his profession,

(which was then by no means held in such degradation as it is at the present time,) and he latterly rode his rounds upon a good blood mare. He used to complain, however, that begging "was a worse trade by forty pounds a year than when he knew it first." He was wont to attend all the fairs and horse-races in the Border districts, and betted and debated with the farmers and gentry with the most independent freedom.

Amongst his other accomplishments, Andrew was accounted the best player at draughts (*vulgo* dam-brod) in Scotland. He was also a skilful adept at cards, and often played for a high stake with those who had cash to spare. Scott mentions that the last time a reverend friend of his saw Andrew, he was engaged in a contest at brag for a considerable parcel of silver, with a gentleman of fortune, distinction and birth; it was indeed reckoned not at all derogatory in any one, of whatever rank, spending an hour in card-playing or conversation with this singular mendicant. Andrew died in 1793, at Roxburgh-Newton, near Kelso, being, according to his own account, 105 years of age. It is said that his wealth was the means of enriching a nephew in Ayrshire, now, or lately, a considerable landholder there, and belonging to a respectable class of society. Edie Ochiltree, however, is drawn in much more amiable colours than his archetype, Andrew Gemmels, and it grates harshly upon the reader's feelings to find the stately old man lapsing from the natural dignity of his bearing, and the independent integrity of his character, into the drawing, hypocritical whine, and urgent solicitation of the mendicant.

Respecting the German quack Dousterswivel, Scott tells us that the part of the narrative relating to him is founded on a fact of actual occurrence; and Mr. Chambers has very recently\* pointed out the original, with singular ingenuity, in the person of Peter Stranger, or Japhet Crook, who lived in the reigns of Queen Anne and George I. This consummate knave has been, with other worthy compeers, condemned to an infamous immortality by Pope, who, in his Third Moral Essay, addressed to Lord Bathurst, speaking of the value of riches—

"What can they give? to dying Hopkins, heirs?  
To Chartres, vigour? Japhet, nose and ears?"—

in allusion to the latter having suffered personal mutilation for practising an infamous fraud on an unsuspecting old gentleman, by which the latter was induced to execute a will in his favour to the exclusion of his natural heirs. It is said that the hardened wretch bore his punish-

\* See Chambers' *Edinburgh Journal*, April 20th, 1833—article "Land of Scott," from the pen of Mr. R. Chambers.

ment with the most cool indifference, remarking that "they might peel his head like a turnip—he did not care—provided they left him his fortune;" of which, by the way, it was found impossible to deprive him. Previous to this, however, he had migrated into Eskdale, and by trickery and impudence similar to that of Dousterswivel, induced the then Duke of Buccleuch (son of the Duke of Monmouth) to enter into some large and ruinous mining operations. The "Glenwithershins," where these operations were conducted, was a place near the famed Johnnie Armstrong's Tower of Glinnockie, where there is still a hamlet termed, from Stranger's operations, the *Forge*. It is easy to understand why Scott did not enter very minutely into an explanation of this part of his narrative.

The fearful death-scene of Elspeth Mucklebackit, is said to have had a precedent in a remarkable incident which happened at the funeral of John, Duke of Roxburghe, who died at London in 1804. An old attached servant, named Archie, who had the charge of his grace's extensive library, was himself, at the time of his master's death, in the last stage of a liver-complaint. He nevertheless insisted on accompanying the body to Scotland, but was so exhausted on reaching Fleurs, that he remained for some days in a sort of stupor. On the morning of the funeral, a particular hand-bell, which the late nobleman had, during life, used exclusively for the purpose of summoning Archie to his study, was heard to ring violently—by whom or what means could not be ascertained. The well-known sound roused Archie from his stupor. Sitting up in bed, he faltered out in broken accents—"Yes, my Lord Duke—yes—I will wait on your grace instantly;" and with these words fell back and expired!

There are few of Scott's writings in which he so strongly displays that benevolent and kindly sympathy with the cares and toils of the poor and laborious, which we have before remarked as being a leading feature of his works, as in the "Antiquary." Witness, for instance, Maggy Mucklebackit's unanswerable retort on Monkbarns, when the latter, in reproof of her occasional attachment to a dram, hopes that the distilleries will never be permitted to work again:—"Ay, ay, its easy for your honour and the like o' you gentlefolks to say sæ, that ha'e stouth and routh, and fire and fending, and meat and claes, and sit dry and canny by the fireside; but an' ye wanted fire and meat and claes, and were deeing o' cauld, and had a sair heart, whilk is warst o' a', wi' just fippence in your pouch, wadna ye be glad to buy a dram wi't, to be eilding and claes, and a supper and heart's ease into the bargain, 'til the morn's morning?"

And again, where the Antiquary, on returning from laying the young fisherman's head in the grave, finds the gruff old father vainly endea-

vouring to repair the "auld black bitch o' a boat," which had swamped with its crew, and congratulates him upon being able to make such exertion after so great a deprivation,—“And what would you have me to do,” answered the almost desperate old man, “unless I wanted to see four children starve, because one is drowned? *it's weel wi' you gentles, that can sit in the house wi' handkerchers at your e'en, when ye lose a friend; but the like o' us mawn to our wark again, if our hearts were beating as hard as my hammer.*” Can a more startling lesson than what is contained in this one sentence, be read to the insensate and ungrateful sons and daughters of luxury? It is unfortunately but too prevalent a doctrine at the present day, to identify aristocratic feeling with indifference and contempt to the hard lot of the poor; but, however much the Baronet of Abbotsford might be predisposed to the former, the latter charge can assuredly never be brought against the author of Waverley. The whole tone, indeed, of the novel we are now speaking of, is redolent of what may be termed popular feeling. Oldbuck himself is a staunch whig—of the *old* school—and the author, through his mouth, defends the principles of that political sect with a shrewdness and sagacity which are far more than a match for the abilities of any opponent he is made to encounter. He satirizes Sir Arthur's high church-and-state doctrines, after a most unmerciful fashion; and even reproves the Earl of Glen-Allan for the catholic horror he manifests towards the prime movers in the French revolution, “because,” expostulates Oldbuck, “a set of furious madmen had gained for a time possession of the government.” “The revolution,” he continues, “might be likened to a storm or hurricane, which, passing over a region, does great damage in its passage, yet sweeps away stagnant and unwholesome vapours, and repays in future health and fertility, its immediate desolation and ravage.” And observe—*no reply is contrived to this remark*: the Earl of Glen-Allan only “shook his head.” No *bigoted* tory could have written thus, however much his personal bearing and public conduct would seem to warrant the belief of his being so. The whole spirit of Scott's writings, indeed, furnishes a singular contrast to his political professions.

“The Antiquary” was published in three volumes in 1816, and the public admiration of its mysterious author was becoming daily warmer, when behold! another mask, assuming the name of “Jedediah Cleishbotham,” appeared almost simultaneously on the stage, under whose auspices four handsome volumes, entitled “Tales of My Landlord,” in the same year issued from the Ballantyne press. The trick was dexterously played off; for in the preface to the Antiquary, the “Author of Waverley” took a formal, and to all appearance final, leave of the public, as if politely making way for a more worthy competitor in

the person of the Schoolmaster of Gandercleugh.\* The fact is, that Scott had seen so many instances of the public getting wearied of over-many and unremittent claims upon their favour from one quarter, that modestly distrusting the extent of his own resources, he began to reckon himself in danger of a similar fate. But his genius was too much for his cunning: and an attempt to draw a veil over the noon-day sun would have been as successful as to hide the effulgence of his own mind. The public had not read ten pages ere they saw how the matter stood, and so far from being dissatisfied with the unconscionable profusion of this literary Briareus, astonishment was only superadded to their admiration.

This new class of productions consisted of two tales—"The Black Dwarf" and "Old Mortality." They are described to be the composition, or compilation, of a Mr. Peter Pattieson, assistant teacher in the parish school of Gandercleugh, (a village, the description of which is supposed to have been taken from Lesmahagow, in the upper ward of Lanarkshire,) and edited after his death by his superior, Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham. "My Landlord" is the Boniface of the chief inn of the village, called the Wallace Inn, where Mr. Cleishbotham is in the habit of taking his daily potations. The quaint and *pedagoguish* introductions to the various tales by this worthy, are amongst the most amusing portions of them,—as the feet of a sheep are said in Scotland to be the best part of the head.

The first of these tales, "The Black Dwarf," opens with a scene at the Wallace Inn, between a south country-store farmer, his confidential shepherd, Mr. Cleishbotham, his assistant, and the landlord. An interesting discussion takes place on the respective merits of *long sheep* and *short sheep*, in which the shepherd incidentally makes allusion to the Black Dwarf, about whom he tells various anecdotes, which Mr. Pattieson afterwards throws into a connected form. The preliminary conversation about the different kinds of sheep was immediately recognized by the Ettrick Shepherd, on the publication of the tale, as being almost word for word the same as one which took place betwixt himself, Scott, and Mr. Laidlaw,† (then factor at Abbotsford,) and at once satisfied

\* The new works also came forth with the imprimatur of his former publisher's great professional (and we should perhaps add political) rival, Mr. Blackwood, on the title-page. The copyright fell into Mr. Constable's hands, however, after the first edition.

† Author of the well-known song "Lucy's Flitting," and other pastoral lyrics. He is a native of Peebles-shire, and son of the Mr. Laidlaw of Blackhouse, (Hogg's early master,) formerly mentioned as being Scott's frequent host and companion in his youthful *Border raids*. After Scott's removal to Abbotsford, Mr. William Laidlaw was engaged by him as a sort of factor, and at one period—during his employer's

him, he says, respecting the authorship of the tale. Hogg and Laidlaw had begun a dispute about the value of the different sheep, during which many allusions were made to their respective *lengths*, a distinction which was to Scott, as we believe it will yet be to many others, perfectly unintelligible. Tired at last of listening to a technical disquisition which he could not understand, he very simply asked what they meant by long and short sheep, as he never had observed, he said, any particular difference in the longitude of one sheep from that of another. An uncontrollable *guffu* exploded from the Shepherd at this remark—"It's the woo'! it's the woo', man!" he exclaimed, when he at length found breath,—and explained the mystery, exactly in the words of "Bauldie" in the novel.

Respecting the unhappy hero of this tale, we presume the history and character of his archetype, David Ritchie, is now so universally known, that we think it superfluous to fill our pages with a recapitulation of them. Mr. Chambers, however, who is a native of the same district (Tweeddale) as David, has recently given\* in his Journal, a more full and interesting account of this unhappy being's character, history and abode, than had previously appeared, with many original anecdotes concerning him. Amongst the latter is an authentic account of Scott's first and only interview with the Recluse in the year 1796, which the writer received from the mouth of Sir Adam Fergusson, (son of the venerable Professor Fergusson, then residing with his family at Halyards in the vale of Manor,) who acted as Scott's cicerone on that occasion. The particulars of this interesting meeting are too curious to be omitted here.

At the first sight of Mr. Scott, the misanthrope seemed impressed with a sentiment of extraordinary interest, which was either owing to the lameness of the stranger, a circumstance throwing a narrower gulf between this person and himself than what existed between him and most other men—or to some perception of an extraordinary mental character in the limping youth, which was then hid from other eyes. After grinning upon him for a moment, with a smile less bitter than his wont, the dwarf passed to the door, double locked it, and then coming up to the stranger, seized him by the wrist with one of his iron hands, and said, "Man, hae ye ony poo'er?" By this he meant magical power, to which he had some vague pretensions, or which, at least, he had studied and reflected upon till it had become with him a sort of monomania. Mr. Scott disavowed the possession of any gifts of

severe illness in 1818-19—he acted as his amanuensis. We understand this worthy man has lately migrated to the wilds of the north, as a store farmer.

\* Chambers' Edinburgh Journal, 27th April, 1833, article "Hermit of Manor."



that sort, evidently to the great disappointment of the inquirer, who then turned round and gave a signal to a huge black cat, hitherto unobserved, which immediately jumped up to a shelf, where it perched itself, and seemed to the excited senses of the visitors as if it had really been the familiar spirit of the mansion. "*He has poo'er!*" said the dwarf, in a voice which made the flesh of the hearers thrill within them, and Mr. Scott in particular looked as if he conceived himself to have actually got into the den of one of those magicians with whom his studies had rendered him familiar. "*Ay, he has poo'er!*" repeated the Recluse, and then going to his usual seat, he sat for some minutes grinning horribly, as if enjoying the impression he had made; while not a word escaped from any of the party. Mr. Fergusson at length plucked up his spirits, and called to David to open the door, as they must now be going. The dwarf slowly obeyed; and when they had got out, Mr. Fergusson observed that his friend was as pale as ashes, while his person was agitated in every limb. Under such striking circumstances was this extraordinary being first presented to the *real* magician, who was afterwards to give him such deathless celebrity.

David Richie died so late as December, 1811, being then upwards of seventy years old. A sister, a poor fatuous being who shared his seclusion for many years, survived till the year 1818, remaining in the solitary cottage alone in spite of all entreaties to remove to a more comfortable abode. Her derangement increased much after her brother's death. The notoriety which her moorland habitation acquired after the publication of the "*Black Dwarf*," caused her much annoyance by the questions put to her by the idle and curious who flocked to the spot. "*Will they no let the dead rest?*" she would mutter to herself after some of these interrogatory scenes: "*What gars the folk spier sae many questions about us? Our parents were poor, but there was nae ill anent them.*" She was deeply affected when told that her brother had been introduced into a play; meaning that his fictitious representative was brought upon the stage in the drama formed out of the novel by Mr. Terry. Her old acquaintance, Sir Adam Fergusson, paid her a visit soon after, and was saluted by her in the following terms:—"Oh, Maister Audam, is 'n this an awfu' like thing? they say they're acting my brother Dauvit in Lunnon? Will they no let the dead rest in their graves?" With that kindly and benevolent sympathy of heart, which was one of his most distinguishing qualities, Scott in his introduction to the late edition of the novel, expressed great concern at having unintentionally been the means of occasioning this poor forlorn object so much uneasiness. But he ought at the same time to have considered, that if he thus brought on her a little verbal persecution, the grievance was amply compensated by the pecuniary donations that were liberally

showered on her by her interrogators, and which secured for her helpless old age many comforts which she would otherwise have wanted.

The "Black Dwarf" is one of the least natural, most meagre, and altogether most unsatisfactory of all Scott's romances. It is infinitely inferior, we think, to "The Monastery," which seems generally reckoned the least worthy of his productions; and we attribute the very different manner in which the two works were received mainly to their respective dates of publication; the one appearing whilst his fame was in its first flush, and the appetite of the public eager even to gluttony,—the other, when it had become hypercritical from satiety. Hobbie Elliot, the most prominent character in the story, (after the misanthrope himself,) is somewhat of a caricature of the bauld borderer; and Ellieslaw and his accomplice Sir Frederick Langley, are truly contemptible personages. The getting up of a political conspiracy, too, solely for the purpose of extorting the heroine's consent to a detested union with an unprincipled villain, is a very far-fetched and clumsy contrivance, and reminds us of the simile of a tempest in a tea-pot. The moss-trooper, Westburnflat, is the most graphic character of the tale, although the era wherein he "flourished" is perhaps too near our own times; and the account of the termination of his career—when, after having enriched himself by a long life of pillage and robbery, he demolishes his stronghold, builds a substantial modern onstead of three stories high—drinks brandy with his neighbours, whom he had formerly plundered—dies in his bed at a good old age—and has it recorded on his tombstone that he had played all the parts of "a brave soldier, a discreet neighbour, and a sincere Christian,"—is in Scott's happiest style of quiet irony. After all, however, the "Black Dwarf" is but an imperfect and interrupted sketch, having been begun with the intention of its being made a much more bulky and elaborate composition. "The story," says the author, "was intended to be longer, and the catastrophe more artificially brought out; but a friendly critic, to whose opinion I subjected the work in its progress, was of opinion, that the idea of the Solitary was of a kind too revolting, and more likely to disgust than to interest the reader. As I had good right to consider my adviser as an excellent judge of public opinion, I got off from my subject by hastening the story to an end as fast as it was possible; and by huddling into one volume a tale which was designed to occupy two, have perhaps produced a narrative as much disproportioned and distorted as the Black Dwarf, who is its subject."

Although the latter conjecture is more correct than the author himself would perhaps have cared to be told, no one who rightly under-

stands the quality of his genius will regret his following the counsel of his friend. Whatever the Black Dwarf might have been in other hands, as the hero of a lengthened romance, he is a character far too widely disunited from the sympathies of humanity for Scott's genius to expend its energies upon with freedom. He could introduce such a being on the stage, as one of the minor personages of his drama, with unequalled effect, but his mind revolted from tarrying upon such characters as the principal figures in the group. He had too much of the kindly feelings of our common nature, and kept up too intimate an acquaintance with the active affections of social life, to allow him to dwell, like Byron, upon the malevolent diseases of the mind, and analyze with torturing minuteness the dark passions of the misanthrope.

Along with the "Black Dwarf," came out in 1816, another romance, in three volumes, for which we believe the author has received more praise and more blame than for any other of his productions. The period selected for the plot of "Old Mortality" may be designated as next to that of the Reformation in point of interest and importance in the annals of Scotland; nor have the hearts and minds of our countrymen, after the lapse of nearly two centuries, yet ceased to vibrate with the emotions and sentiments which influenced the actors in that memorable passage of our history. The motives of those who first offered violent resistance to their political rulers were the noblest which could animate the human breast, and future ages must still look back to them with veneration as the fearless vindicators of their civil and religious liberties. Never was the sword drawn in a more righteous cause, whether it were to vindicate freedom of conscience in the exercise of their religious devotions, or to resist political oppression. Scarcely had Charles II. been placed on the throne of his fathers, when—forgetful of the loyalty and hospitality of the Scots, who had sheltered him in his adversity, crowned him at Scone in defiance of his rebellious subjects of England, and supported his cause until the decisive battle of Worcester threw the whole kingdom into the hands of the Independent or Cromwellian faction—he endeavoured to force episcopacy upon the presbyterians, visiting resistance or noncompliance on their part with heavy fines; and established a standing army to levy these impositions, the soldiers of which were not only authorized to exact free quarters wherever they went, but were allowed to plunder and oppress with the most complete impunity. In fact, Scotland may be said to have been at that period utterly at the mercy of these licentious tyrants. The people, who betook themselves to private conventicles for the sake of worshipping God according to their conscience, were, besides being

fined, subjected to personal abuse at the brutal will of their oppressors; their ministers thrown into the dungeons of Dunottar, Dumbarton, the Bass, &c., and many were banished to foreign climes. Masters were obliged to enter into bonds that their servants would not attend these meetings, and landlords to come under these engagements for all who lived on their estates.\* But it would occupy volumes to detail the various oppressions to which the presbyterians were subjected during that black era.

For *nearly twenty years* did the people of Scotland submit to their intolerable grievances, without any general demonstration of resistance; but the smothered fire at last broke out in 1666, at a small village in Galloway, where the peasantry rose against a party of dragoons, who were dragging some of their countrymen to jail, and treating them in the most inhuman manner. This partial insurrection was put down in the same year by General Dalziel of Binns, who overtook the insurgents at Rullion-Green on the Pentland Hills, and dispersed them, after cutting down between fifty and sixty of them on the spot, and taking many prisoners. From this time the sufferings of the presbyterians were aggravated in a tenfold degree. To Grahame of Claverhouse was committed the command of the troops employed against them, who exercised his powers with the most relentless cruelty; and extraordinary functions were vested in the Privy Council of Scotland, who examined their victims by torture, and executed them without mercy or remorse. To complete their condition of hopeless suffering, James Sharpe, who had undertaken a mission to London for the express purpose of pleading their cause with government, sold himself to their enemies, and returned in the character of Archbishop of St. Andrews.

Such was the condition of the presbyterians prior to the opening of this tale; and instead of surprise being occasioned at their once more resorting to arms to vindicate their rights as Christians and as citizens, their submitting so long to such iniquitous oppression is rather calcu-

\* The "Indulgence" which has been so much rested on by the defenders of the persecutors, as a proof of the inclination of government to extend protection and toleration to all who preserved their civil allegiance, was, in truth, one of the most insulting as well as inquisitorial measures adopted towards the presbyterians. Those clergymen who were permitted to avail themselves of this "indulgent act," were for the most part tools of the government, who acted as spies on their own parishioners, and pointed out to their superiors all who were supposed unfriendly to their authority. Scott notices this fact in the novel spoken of in the text,—see the scenes where Claverhouse reads to Henry Morton the character drawn of him by his parish clergyman, Poundtext, wherein that reverend gentleman—afterwards his fellow-insurgent—had returned him as one "triple dangerous" to government.

lated to excite wonder,—and would even expose them to the imputation of pusillanimity, were the motives of their endurance not so well known to be of a very different character. Unfortunately, however, the first insurrectionary measure was the commission of a deed which not only estranged from the insurgents almost all the wiser and better disposed of their fellow-sufferers, lest they might be suspected of giving countenance to the act, but gave their oppressors too feasible an excuse for the severities with which they visited them. The apostate Sharpe was waylaid and slain on Magus-moor, in Fifeshire; the actors in that tragedy fled to the wilds of Galloway, the chief resort of the persecuted, where the whole party assembled openly renounced allegiance to the king's authority both in church and state. It is at this time that the tale begins, the plot and details of which, down to the battle of Bothwell-brig, where they terminate, it is unnecessary to trace out in these pages.

We have often felt surprise that Scott—cautious, almost to timidity, as he has generally shown himself, in avoiding every topic likely to give offence either to individuals or communities—should have hazarded his pen on such a subject as the persecution, involved as it still is in much of prejudice and irritating recollection. It is true that the Cameronians, whom he has brought forward most prominently amongst the oppressed, have now dwindled down as a body to an obscure remnant; but there were amongst the leaders of that sect, at the above period, men to whose undaunted courage the whole presbyterian community of the present day justly look back as the noblest of patriots and Christians, and for whose sake they are ready to overlook much that was erroneous and perhaps blameable amongst their followers. Scott, therefore, was venturing upon perilous ground, nor did he escape altogether without reproach. No small outcry was raised when “*Old Mortality*” appeared, not only by the still existing body of Cameronians themselves, but by some of the more zealous of the presbyterians, many of whose ancestors had belonged to that sect. Their complaints were soon put into form by the pen of Dr. Mc'Crie, the able biographer of Knox, who wrote several elaborate articles on the subject in the *Christian Instructor* for 1817, which were afterwards published separately in a pamphlet. The principal charges brought by him against the novelist were—gross partiality towards the persecutors, and unjust misrepresentation of the oppressed; and in support of these accusations, the reverend doctor led on to the attack a whole host of authorities in the shape of “*Vindications*,” “*Defences*,” “*Apologies*,” &c. &c. which emanated either from the sufferers themselves or their posterity, with the formidable “*Cloud of Witnesses*” itself. No man can ques-

tion the purity or sincerity of the reverend doctor's motives in these strictures, or the ability with which he chastises the race of light-hearted scoffers, who are so abundant at the present day ; but it must be confessed, even by his warmest admirers, that his zeal was somewhat misplaced, and that he has treated the novelist with an acrimony quite unjustified by the ostensible occasion. He seems to have assumed Scott as the mouth-piece of all the revilers of the covenanters, since the battle of Bothwell-bridge, and launches against him as an individual the thunders which should be directed against an ungrateful and irreverent posterity. Nor can he be acquitted of much unfair illiberality of criticism. He capriciously selects from the novel sentiments which fall from various of the cavaliers, which he gratuitously assumes to be the author's private opinions ; and quotes the scripture-larded slang of the more ignorant and fanatical of the insurgents, as being an intended sample of the characteristic language of the whole presbyterian sect ! The critic, moreover, is seemingly unable to express the extremity of his indignation at our author's giving to Claverhouse a pleasing form, a fine set of features, and a winning address ; as if all these attributes, and many others of a far more estimable quality, had not been assigned him by nature, but invented by the novelist to seduce our hearts from the contemplation of his cruel disposition ! All this is very absurd, to say the least of it ; and we feel convinced, that in proportion as posterity is enabled to judge more coolly of the events and characters of that unhappy era, so will Scott be acquitted of *prejudice* in his delineation of them. It is, at least, in the highest degree unjust to charge him with any leaning towards the measures or agents of Charles's government. The former he denounces in the most unequivocal terms, and the latter he exhibits in colours which make the blood boil with indignation. The fine person and gallant demeanour of Claverhouse only render the picture of his remorseless cruelty of disposition, his insatiable thirst for slaughter, the more hideous and revolting ; while not one redeeming stroke of the pencil is given to palliate the brutality of Lauderdale, the wolfish fierceness of Dalziel, and the vulgar insolence of Bothwell.

Scott's chief errors in this tale appear to us to be the following :—In the first place, he has given no sketch of the actual condition of the presbyterians at the time he treats of, or of the causes that literally drove them into measures of self-defence and retaliation. He tells us nothing of the unparalleled oppression, the persecution, the tortures, which they had for nineteen long years patiently endured, in their aversion to shed blood and to becoming their own avengers,—of their being driven into the wilderness, and hunted down like wild beasts,—of parents and children compelled to become each other's accusers, or massacred for re-

fusing,—of freemen being shipped off as slaves to our colonies, or driven to madness by cold, famine, and terror in the dreary dungeons of the Bass ;—nothing of all this, we say, is presented to our eye, and it is of course only those already well acquainted with the history of those times who can make allowance for that fierce and revengeful fanaticism—the offspring of persecution—which was, in too many instances, manifested by the adherents of the Covenant. This we reckon a great and unpardonable fault in the author,—the more so, that a retrospective sketch such as we speak of, might have been introduced, not only with ease, but with powerful effect, into the mouth of Macbriar, or some of the other zealous but more rational preachers, instead of the prolix absurdities of Kettledrummie, or the insane ravings of Habbakuk Mucklewrath. The second fault, and which is partly a natural consequent of the first, is, that almost none but the fanatical and disputatious of the covenanting sect are brought prominently forward, thus leaving it to be inferred, that the author intended them as an average specimen of the whole presbyterian host. Scott, indeed, seems to have fallen into an historical error in representing the majority of the insurgents as consisting of Cameronians. On the contrary, they formed a very small proportion of their body ; and there were numbers who, without the slightest wish for overturning the king's civil authority, were anxious only for simple toleration to exercise their spiritual privileges according to their conscience.

At the same time, we believe we may assert, that the novelist has introduced no character into his work which had not one, if not many archetypes amongst the presbyterians of that period. If we turn up some of the sermons preached and printed at that time, we will find many passages far surpassing in extravagance any thing which falls from Kettledrummie, or Poundtext, or Macbriar,—although we are far from justifying Scott for inventing similar rhapsodies. We will give a short extract from one of these effusions as a specimen of the popular scriptural oratory amongst the Cameronians of that day :

“ There is many folk that has a face to the religion that is in fashion, and there is many folk have ay a face to the old company ; they have a face for godly folk, and they have a face for persecutors of godly folk ; and they will be daddie's bairns and minnie's bairns baith ! and they will be prelate's bairns, and they will be malignant's bairns, and they will be the people of God's bairns ! And what think ye of that bastard temper ? Poor Peter had a trial of this soupleness ; but God made Paul take him by the neck and shake this soupleness from him ; and O that God would take us by the neck and shake our soupleness from us !  
 \* \* \* \* And our old job-trot ministers hae turned *curates*, and our

old job-trot professors is joined with them; and now this way God has turned them inside out, and has made it manifest; and when their heart is hanging upon this braw, I will not give a grey groat for them and their profession both! The devil has the ministers and professors of Scotland now in a sieve, and O as he sifts! and O as he riddles! and O as he rattles! and O the chaff he gets! And I fear there will be more chaff nor there be good corn, and that will be found among us or all be done; but the soul-confirmed man leaves ever the devil at two more; and he has ay the matter gauged, and leaves ay the devil at the leese!" &c. &c.

Such were the sort of vituperative philippics which the Cameronians vented against their moderate brethren, whom they characterised as Erastian and time-serving, because the latter prudently refrained from standing out on certain abstract points of profession and ceremonial which might produce unnecessary collision with the government. These intolerant men, in short, disowned all authority or brotherhood whatever, not under the tie of the solemn league and covenant; and the hopes of re-establishing that old national engagement frequently led them—as in the case of Burley with Claverhouse, in the novel—into the most preposterous and unprincipled alliances with their mortal enemies the Jacobites and other incendiaries, interested only in disturbing the newly established government. As the greater part of the Cameronian congregation were gathered from the lower and more ignorant portion of the community, they naturally aped the colloquial scriptural jargon of their instructors, and Scott has given a most graphic specimen of that class in the person of old Mause, whom, notwithstanding all her cant and ill timed displays of biblical knowledge, we are nevertheless compelled to respect for her fearless steadfastness of principle.

Balfour of Burley is made a better man in the novel than what he was in reality. Unscrupulous as he is represented to have been respecting the means of accomplishing his purposes, we are willing to make great allowances in consideration of his conscientious religious zeal, which is assigned as the *primum mobile* of all his actions, good or bad. But cotemporary historians represent him as the reverse of a religious man in private life, and only trusted for his resolution, strength, and skill as a soldier.\*

\* This man did not die in the manner represented in the novel. He went to Holland after the battle of Bothwell Bridge, where his restless and ambitious mind soon organized another plan of insurrection in his native country, in returning to execute which, he died during the voyage.



On the whole, if we except the two sins of omission rather than of commission, above stated, we cannot see that the descendants of the Covenanters have much reason to complain of Scott's picture of them in "Old Mortality." Morton (one of the best of all his heroes) is an admirable set-off to the reckless and bigoted fanatics with whom he is associated, and is amongst his own party what the amiable Lord Evandale is amongst the cavaliers. Bessie Maclure, the poor, destitute, but benevolent widow, is an excellent qualification to the fiery and redoubted Mause. And Macbriar—the high-minded—the undaunted—the rejoicing martyr, Macbriar,—welcoming the gibbet with a countenance "radiant with joy and triumph," and showering blessings on the tortures of his mangled frame—he is a character in which the absurdities of Poundtext, Kettlewrumple, Mucklewrath and the rest, are completely forgotten.

Scott nevertheless found it necessary to notice the clamour that was raised against him both by the high-church, or episcopalian party, and the presbyterians,—for both were dissatisfied with his delineation of their respective ancestors, and he was alternately denounced by each as an apostate to the religious faith of his forefathers. From the latter dilemma, Scott extricated himself most happily, and his vindication is altogether in his own peculiarly ingenious manner. It occurs in the introduction to the second series of the "Tales of My Landlord," published in 1818, and is as follows—*quasi Cleishbotham loquitur* :—

"These cavillers have not only doubted my identity, but they have impeached my veracity and the authenticity of my historical narratives! It is true, indeed, that if I had hearkened with only one ear, I might have rehearsed my tale with more acceptance from those who love to hear but half the truth. It is, mayhap, not altogether to the discredit of our kindly nation of Scotland, that we are apt to take an interest, warm, yea partial, in the deeds and sentiments of our forefathers. He whom his adversaries describe as a perjured prelatist, is desirous that his predecessors should be held moderate in their power, and just in the execution of its privileges, when, truly, the unimpassioned peruser of the annals of those times shall deem them sanguinary, violent and tyrannical. Again, the representatives of the suffering non-conformists desire that their ancestors, the Cameronians, shall be represented not simply as honest enthusiasts, oppressed for conscience-sake, but persons of fine breeding and valiant heroes. Truly, the historian cannot gratify those predilections. He must needs describe the cavaliers as proud and high-spirited, cruel, remorseless and vindictive; the suffering party as honourably tenacious of their opinions under persecution;

their own tempers being, however, sullen, fierce and rude; their opinions absurd and extravagant, and their whole course of conduct that of persons whom hellebore would better have suited than persecution unto death for high treason. Nathless, while such and so preposterous were the opinions on either side, there were, it cannot be doubted, men of virtue and worth on both, to entitle either party to claim merit from its martyrs. It has been demanded of me, Jedediah Oleishbotham, by what right I am entitled to constitute myself an impartial judge of their discrepancies of opinions, seeing (as is stated) that I must necessarily have been descended from one or other of the contending parties, and be, of course, wedded for better or worse, according to the reasonable practice of Scotland, to its dogmata or opinions, and bound, as it were, by the tie matrimonial, or, to speak without metaphor, *ex jure sanguinis*, to maintain them in preference to all others. But nothing denying the rationality of the rule which calls on all now living to rule their political and religious opinions by those of their great-grandfathers, and inevitable as seems the one or the other horn of the dilemma betwixt which my adversaries conceive they have pinned me to the wall, I yet spy some means of refuge, and claim a privilege to write and speak of both parties with impartiality. For, O ye powers of logic! when the prelatists and presbyterians of old times went by the ears together in this unlucky country, my ancestor (venerated be his memory!) was one of the people called Quakers, and suffered severe handling on either side, even to the extenuation of his purse, and the incarceration of his person."

The latter statement is literally true. The author's great-grandfather, Walter Scott of Raeburn, third son of Sir William Scott of Harden, and grandfather of Mr. Robert Scott of Sandy Knowe, became a convert to Quakerism, about the middle of the seventeenth century, at the same time when the celebrated George Fox, the apostle of the sect, made an expedition into Scotland. Upon the death of Sir William, the elder brother, who remained orthodox to the presbyterian faith, had interest enough with the Privy Council to procure Walter's imprisonment in the tolbooth at Edinburgh, whence he was transported to the jail of Jedburgh, in order to give his friends and relatives better opportunities of reconverting him. His two sons William and Walter, and a daughter, Isobel, were likewise placed under the tutorage of their uncle, to prevent their being infected with their father's doctrines, and two thousand pounds Scots were ordered to be paid out of the lands of Eilrig and Raeburn, (their father's patrimony,) for their maintenance and education. The son, Walter, was Scott's immediate great-grandfather.

But there was also another ancestral link between Scott and the worthy society of Friends, through a much more important proselyte than Walter Scott of Raeburn. John Swinton of Swinton, ninth baron in descent of that ancient and once powerful family, was, with Sir William Lockhart of Lee, the person whom Cromwell chiefly trusted with the management of the Scottish affairs during his usurpation. After the restoration, Swinton was devoted as a victim to the new order of things along with the Marquis of Argyle, in company with whom he was brought to Edinburgh. Through the intercession of powerful friends, Swinton, who had then assumed the Quaker faith and dress, escaped the fate of the unfortunate Argyle, but was subjected to a long imprisonment and much dilapidation of his estates. It was Jean Swinton, a grand-daughter of Sir John Swinton, son of the Quaker, who was wife of Dr. John Rutherford, and mother of Anne Rutherford, the author's mother, whom we slightly noticed at the outset of our memoir.

Although Scott may thus by his subsequent lapse into prelacy, be considered as an apostate in a double sense to the faith of his progenitors, he seems to have all along cherished a deep feeling of veneration towards the simple-minded and excellent members of the society of Friends—a body of men, to whose unostentatious worth so fine and just a tribute of respect was paid by the present legislature, by the unanimous annulment of their disabilities to participate in the councils of the nation.\* In Joshua Geddes and his sister Rachel, (the only specimens by the way, whom he has introduced into his novels,) Scott has drawn most favourable pictures of the kindly benevolence of the sect.

But notwithstanding our author's self-justification of his description of the covenanters, he afterwards acknowledged that if he had the tale to write over again, he would have given a higher tone to the presbyterian character, and it would almost appear that it was his conviction of the propriety and justice of doing so, that instigated him to draw his picture of the family of the Deanses, in the second series of the "Tales of My Landlord."

We have been induced to say more respecting the tale of "Old Mortality," than our limits perhaps warrant us in doing,—for two reasons. In the first place, it is the only one of Scott's works wherein

\* We here allude, of course, to the admission of Mr. Pease to a seat in the House of Commons, as member for Durham, ere his disqualifications were judicially abrogated;—a somewhat irregular proceeding, doubtless, but in prospective object of which every unprejudiced mind must concur.

he has been accused of political partiality, or an anti-popular strain of feeling; and, in the second place, because our opinion is, we candidly confess, that this is, by far, the best of that class of his novels, more properly termed *Scotch*. There is in it all that close portraiture of character, which we have noticed as being the chief excellence of the "Antiquary:" and at the same time infinitely greater diversity of it. There is also far more bustle and energy in the narrative; while the incidents are a thousand degrees more generally interesting. In one peculiarity, indeed, this novel stands above all the other members of its family. There is not one useless or *expletive* character introduced into it. Every individual, from the Duke of Monmouth to Goose Gibbie, contributes his share in the progress of the plot and interest of the story. Every stroke of the pencil is redolent of nature and truth,—and the whole affords, in our opinion, the best exemplification of the truth of the late lamented Mrs. Brunton's observation, "that a single page of Scott's novels is worth whole volumes of common inventions."

## CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE PUBLICATION OF ROB ROY IN 1818, TO THE DIVULGEMENT OF  
THE WAVERLEY SECRET, FEBRUARY 23d, 1827.

Our limited space leaves us little opportunity for any thing beyond a simple enumeration of the remaining voluminous publications of our author; and indeed, retrospect becomes the less necessary the nearer we approach the termination of our labours.

As if to add to the festivities of the season, "Rob Roy"\* came out (or came in) with the year 1818; and the British public have seldom been presented with a more acceptable Christmas gift. In this publication the author resumed his original masquerade habit, and made a humorous excuse for breaking through the vow of future silence he had imposed on himself in the preface to "The Antiquary." But the merits of the work of themselves proved a sufficient apology for this breach of promise.

"Rob Roy" is much of the same character as "Waverley." The scenery and many of the characters are alike, and their respective plots are worked up with the same causes of civil discord. In one respect "Rob Roy" differs from all the other novels of Scott—the narrative is told in the first person," a style of composition which, with some advantages, is, we believe, generally found much more troublesome to manage by novel writers, from the difficulty of avoiding a tiresome

\* In the last edition of the novels, the publishers, we observe, have placed "Rob Roy" next in succession to the "Antiquary," for the purpose we suppose—at least we can see no other—of bringing the first three series of "Tales of My Landlord" together. This is surely a very frivolous reason for such a chronological misarrangement of these publications. Why not also place in juxta-position the *fourth* series published in 1831?

egotism on the part of the assumed narrator, and of the writer's maintaining, as it were, a fictitious existence with consistency for a length of time, without permitting his own feelings and opinions to intrude and destroy the illusion. This power, however, was one of the most prominent and extraordinary qualities of Scott's genius. We read in our fairy tales of magicians who possessed the gift of throwing their spirit out of its natural mansion into any other sort of fleshly habitation they chose, whether of man or beast. But Scott was a greater magician than they. He could at will, transmute his spirit as well as his person, and we can, in fact, find in his writings every sort of individual—but Walter Scott. And here we cannot help remarking, in passing, how singular and striking a contrast is presented, in this respect, betwixt him and the other literary colossus of the day—his successor as “Monarch of Parnassus”—who now divided the admiration of the public with him. While Scott was throwing off novel after novel with a rapidity that must ever seem to lesser minds as nothing short of miraculous, Byron was flinging from him poem after poem with scarcely less astounding profusion. They divided the applause of the world betwixt them, which they alike *commanded* by the splendour of their minds—“alike! but oh, how differently.” The beings of the noble poet's depicting were but creatures into whose brain and veins he transfused his own wild passions and diseased imaginings. They were, in a manner, mere “illustrations” of himself in his darker moods,—all exaggerated, no doubt, as if he took a strange delight in rendering the human mind hideous to itself, and his own the most hideous of all; but the same jarring chords were struck too often not to show, that, if he was not indeed the fearful thing he represented himself, his mind must have been pitched in a sympathetic key to those of his Childe Harold, his Conrade, and his Lara. His own passions and emotions animate all his heroes, and the character of Byron is interwoven with every verse of his poetry.

In the writings of Scott, again, there is so little of their author visible, that even his bosom friends were unable to discover traces of his character in any of his heroes. This fact alone we hold to be decisive of the superior *breadth* of his genius. Byron's mind and feelings, however powerful and acute, were still selfish and engrossing. Scott comprehended and sympathised with those of the whole human race, and therefore it is that his writings embrace a range of style and character as diversified and multifarious as that contained in Polonius's enumeration of the accomplishments of the royal players.

As in all his novels, Scott seems to have commenced “Rob Roy” without any systematic plot. In fact, after the first two or three

attempts, he gave up all thoughts of laying down a regular groundwork for any of his tales. By his own confession, as we have seen, he broke off from the original plans of "Waverley" and "Guy Mannering," after the first two or three chapters were written. Mr. Cunningham tells us of a conversation which took place betwixt Scott and himself on this subject. "We talked" says he, "of romance-writing: 'When you wish to write a story,' said Scott, 'I advise you to prepare a kind of outline—a skeleton of the subject; and when you have pleased yourself with it, proceed to endow it with flesh and blood.' 'I remember,' I said, 'that you gave me much the same sort of advice before.' 'And did you follow it?' he said quickly. 'I tried,' I answered, 'but I had not gone far on my way, till some will-o'-wisp or another dazzled my sight! so I deviated from the path, and never got on it again.' 'Tis the same way with myself,' he said, smiling, 'I form my plan, and then in executing it, I deviate.' "

There occurs in several parts of "Rob Roy," accordingly, no little confusion and mystification in the narrative, particularly respecting Rashleigh's political intrigues and mercantile defalcations. There are also several palpable departures from probability in the incidents—such as the literary execution of the whole gigantic family of Osbaldistones, comprehending a father and six sons, within a few months, in order to clear the way for the hero's succession to the family estate. The idea, too, of Mac Gregor's carrying a large drove of Highland cattle to aid him in rescuing Sir Frederick and Diana Vernon from the machinations of Rashleigh, is a most extraordinary contrivance, and suggests the idea of a foot-pad setting out to commit a highway robbery in a baggage-wagon.

The deficiencies of the tale in these respects, however, are amply made up by its excellence in other qualities. The readers and admirers of the "Lady of the Lake," "Lord of the Isles," and "Waverley," were delighted to be transported once more to the bracing air and sublime scenery of the Highlands; and it would actually appear that the scent of the heather and the sight of the tartan invariably communicated fresh vigour and boldness to the spirit of the novelist himself. The characters are all admirable in themselves, and placed in striking contrast with each other. Those of the Bailie, Rashleigh, and Die Vernon, are perhaps the best,—the most original in conception, and the most difficult to sustain. There can scarcely be conceived a more unpromising subject for delineation than the conceited, purse-proud dignitary, to whom we are first introduced,—full of his own local dignity, and redolent of his eternal prudential saws in the science of money-making. Yet how excellent a being does he become on

farther acquaintance ? How much spirit and generosity and warmheartedness is hidden under his formal and pedantic deportment and habits of mercenary calculation !

Rashleigh is one of the very best of that most difficult of all characters to depict, a plausible, talented, and remorseless villain. These personages in common hands do little else than irritate and disgust,—their knavery is seen through. But Rashleigh is a perfect hypocrite ; we feel that he would have completely deceived ourselves, and we cannot well be persuaded of his villany, until he is pleased of his own accord to disclose his defection from the paths of honour and virtue.

Diana Vernon is, we believe, the most general favourite of all Scott's *young ladies*, and perhaps deservedly so ; but candour compels us to say, that for a considerable time after being introduced to her, we felt much inclined to suck in our jaws, like Andrew Fairservice, shake our head and say,—“She's a wild slip that.” There is positively something too unnatural and exaggerated in this young lady's portrait. That there may be many young ladies possessed of as much learning, talent, vivacity, sarcasm, and skill of horsemanship, as Miss Die, we will not venture to dispute ; but we reckon it a solecism in nature that a girl of eighteen, be her abilities or book-knowledge what they may, accustomed all her life to no other society but that of *sots* and jockeys, (with the exception of a melancholy father and a secluded student,) could possibly have acquired that eloquence and purity of expression, readiness of repartee, power of illustration, and elegant ease of deportment, which Scott assigns to her. The portraits of her six cousins, which she dashes off in fifteen minutes with an ease and severity which it is impossible to avoid being much amused with, could only be the handiwork of one who had enjoyed opportunities of contrasting their brutal deportment and habits with the polished manners and elegant accomplishments of refined society. It is true, we get accustomed to “her ways” by degrees—nay, as in the case of Flora Mac-Ivor, we absolutely begin to like her, *when she falls into distress*, and manifests such a calm and uncomplaining spirit of endurance ; but Mr. Francis Osbaldistone was indeed a bold man to perpetrate the tie matrimonial with one who had given him such undoubted proofs of self-willedness, and shown herself such an adept in the art of scolding. But we have no wish to put the public out of humour with their favourite, the “Heath-bell of Cheviot,” and shall wind up our observations on her with the usual convenient phrase of those who are puzzled to form an opinion, or afraid to deliver it—that she is “altogether an extraordinary young woman.”



None of Scott's novels, we believe, took such an universal and influential hold of the public mind as "Rob Roy." Our streets and highways were thronged with scampering Dianas: Celtic clubs and societies were formed in every town and village in the kingdom; the war-pipe "waked its wild voice anew" in our halls and streets; tartans, for a while, fairly superseded broadcloth, threatening Gloucestershire and Yorkshire with ruin; and the monarch and the peasant alike proudly strutted in the kilt and philabeg. It is curious—perhaps somewhat ludicrous—to reflect on the Celto-mania which pervaded the land at that period; but the more extravagant the enthusiasm displayed by our usually grave and soberminded countrymen, the more remarkable must the power of the master-mind, who gave rise to all this, appear. We recollect being present at the presentation of its first pair of colours to one of our Edinburgh troops of Celts. The scene was the Queen Street gardens, and the presenter of the gift was Walter Scott. We were close beside the great man, who delivered his address in so low a tone of voice, that, but for the death-still silence that prevailed, not a word would have been audible. When he concluded, and the appropriate martial pibroch struck up, a shout arose which rent the welkin, and a hundred claymores flashed in the air as if impatient for the deadly strife. Yet of all the warriors present, perhaps not one had ever handled a more formidable weapon than a goose-quill or a brief before in their lives. In fact, they were almost all young members of the bar, and writers to the signet. Amid the martial-like turmoil, the old man who had been the cause of all their enthusiasm, *hirpled* away unnoticed amongst the crowd of fashionables as if from a scene with which he had not the slightest connection. The drama (or opera,) founded on the novel, was the means of reviving a taste for theatricals in Edinburgh. For months the theatre was crowded to the door, and the *run*, as it is termed, not only avowedly saved the establishment from ruin, but enriched the proprietors, and enabled Mrs. Siddons to establish the "Theatrical Fund" for the support of decayed actors, at the first annual dinner of which Scott afterwards unmasked himself. But of this anon.

While the whole world was thus running *clean wud*, as Andrew Fairservice says, about Glasgow bailies and breechless Highlandmen, that worthy personage, Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, as if to allay the fury of the tartan fever that had seized on the community, stepped forward with a second series of Mr. Pattieson's tales, and administered a febrifuge (we should perhaps rather say a *counter-irritant*) in the shape of "The Heart of Midlothian," which made its appearance, in four volumes, exactly *four months* after the publication of "Rob Roy."

The commingled admiration and curiosity of the public at this period, as we well recollect, was beyond every thing intense. The mysterious author and his works were the theme of every tongue, the topic of every conversation. Copies of the *next novel* were ordered from the booksellers before even its name was known, and perhaps before it was written; but people now began to reckon on their appearance with as much confidence as on the recurrence of a periodical festivity; and the struggle for priority as readers, among the supporters of our circulating libraries, led to the registering of scores of names in anticipation of the forthcoming volumes. As these were lent out at the somewhat exorbitant rate of sixpence each per night, parties of young men, in order to save expense, were in the habit of assembling at each other's lodgings over evening, where by sitting up all night, and reading chapters in turn, they were enabled to get through the whole by breakfast-time next morning. In fact the perusal of the novels cost each reader, we are convinced, on an average, a much greater sacrifice of sleep and leisure than the composition of them did their author.

The "Heart of Midlothian" is a complete contrast to "Rob Roy," equally in plot, character, scenery, and incident; and it was regarded with considerable suspicion, if not dislike, by the more fashionable and sentimental portion of the reading public. It was indeed putting their delicate sensibilities to a severe test to demand the exercise of them towards "*those low creatures, the cow-feeders*"—as a worthy spinstress is said to have observed at the time with a shrug of disgust. Effie, to be sure, was an exception; and by subsequently becoming, as she does, a woman of rank and fashion, her low origin, as well as her early moral peccadilloes, might be overlooked. But it was really too much in the writer to think of interesting people of taste in the fortunes of so many illiterate beings, and to introduce them to such lowlife scenes as the work abounds in. So thought the circles of fashionable life, but Scott was the chronicler of nature, not of fashion. There was no phase of the human character, however regulated by the circumstances of birth, or acted upon by the accidental influences of education and society, that was too degraded for his sympathy. He could appreciate the divine attributes of our nature, in whatever form presented, or in whatever casket enclosed; and could understand, and feel, and *demonstrate*, how the habiliments of poverty could cover a more sterling and upright bosom than the robes of a prince. Of this philosophic view of human nature, his "Jeanie Deans" is a beautiful exemplification. He does not reckon it necessary to lift her out of her original humble sphere or character in order to enlist in her behalf the feelings of his readers. She remains the same simple, unlettered, vul-

gar girl throughout—the daughter, in short, of Davie Deans the cow-feeder; whilst she performs acts of heroism, and exhibits principles of virtue and religious firmness in circumstances the most trying which exalt our species in our estimation. It is now, perhaps, well known, that this character, as far at least as respects the main incidents of the story—the trial and condemnation of her sister for child-murder—her journey to London on foot, and obtaining her sister's pardon—were taken from facts: the original heroine being Helen Walker, the daughter of a small farmer at Dalwhairn, in the parish of Irongray, in the stewartry of Kirkcudbright.\* She died about the end of the year 1791, in very humble circumstances, at the Mills of Cluden, near Dumfries, and a monument, at Scott's expense, has been placed over her remains in the churchyard of Irongray within the last two years. The inscription on it bears simply the name of Helen Walker, and the date of her death. Her virtues he has recorded in a more durable manner. Her sister Isabella, or Tibby Walker, who was so marvelously saved from a disgraceful doom, was afterwards married to the person who wronged her (named Waugh,) and lived happily for the best part of a century, at Whitehaven, on the Solway; and an old woman still (or very lately) living at the Mills of Cluden, remembers of Helen annually receiving a cheese from her sister, who to the last manifested a strong sense of the extraordinary affection to which she owed her preservation.

Respecting the origin of, and chief actors in, the Porteous mob, over all the circumstances attending which such a veil of impenetrable mystery has been cast seemingly for ever, our author has evidently spared no pains to arrive at accuracy in his detail of this remarkable occurrence; but although the incidents of the riot are for the most part given with remarkable accuracy, he has been utterly baffled in all his endeavours to discover any thing with certainty respecting the conspirators. The only feasible account of the origin of it which he was able to procure, was the reported death-bed confession of a man in Fife, a wood-forester to a gentleman of fortune, who was said to have affirmed that he was not only one of the actors in the affair, but one of the secret few by whom the deed was schemed. Twelve persons of the village of Pathhead, Fifeshire,—Wilson's native place,—according to this man's alleged statement, resolved that Porteous should die, to atone for the death of Wilson, with whom many of them had been connected by the ties of friendship and joint adventure in illicit trade. This vengeful band crossed the Forth by different ferries, and met together at a solitary place near the city, whence they distributed themselves through the suburbs: and giving a beginning to the enterprise, soon

\* For a full account of this heroine, see M'Diarmid's *Sketches of Nature*."

saw it undertaken by the populace, whose minds were quite ripe for such an undertaking from motives of revenge for the death of so many innocent citizens, as well as indignation at the partial measures of government. But notwithstanding the circumstantiality, and indeed great probability of this man's account, it appears that when Scott proceeded personally to make inquiries amongst his descendants, they scouted the rumoured confession as a complete fiction, and indignantly repelled the charge brought against their ancestor's memory.\*

But in whatever way, or with whatever parties the plot originated, we have been able to gain pretty certain information respecting *one actor*, at least, in the Porteous mob. A friend, whose maternal uncle died many years ago, at a very advanced age, (and whom we personally recollect) informs us that the old gentleman used frequently to speak of the Porteous mob, which he may be said to have witnessed, (being in business in the Pleasance as a brewer at the time) and that he *latterly* mentioned the name of one individual who had been implicated in it, and from whom he had personally received an account of many circumstances attending the transaction. This individual's name was Cumming, a butcher by trade, and whose place of business was in the low market of Edinburgh. He died unmolested at a very advanced age.

Cumming would never divulge the names of his accomplices, but acknowledged to the old gentleman above mentioned, that he was one of the leaders in the riot, and was the first who laid hands upon Porteous after the jail was forced. His version of this part of the proceedings was different from Scott's, who, it will be recollected, states that Porteous was dragged from the chimney, where he had hid himself in the agony of his terror. Cumming's story was—and it bears all the marks of authenticity—that Porteous cunningly ensconced himself at the inner side of the door of his room, so that when forced open, it folded back upon him, and for the moment concealed him from view; and the room being almost instantaneously filled with his pursuers, who poured in like dammed-up water through a new-opened sluice, he was speedily involved amongst them, as if one of themselves. In this way, and by exerting a little prudence, he would in all probability have escaped, but his anxiety to get clear of the men who were yelling around him like ravenous hounds thirsting for his blood, prompted him to endeavour to force his way out. This movement—pressing outwards when all others were eagerly pressing in—naturally attracted the notice of some of the rioters, and amongst the rest Cumming, who immediately recognised him, seized him by the collar, and

\* See third series of "Tales of a Grandfather."

cried, "here is our man!" This account, it will be allowed, if untrue, does not *look* like an invention at least. Cumming likewise said that there was nothing like an organized conspiracy amongst the mass of rioters, who consisted chiefly of bakers, butchers, and brewers' servants (including the old gentleman's own;) that the design had been merely whispered amongst them in an indefinite manner, but that it spread as quickly and silently as an epidemic, and that they joined in the attempt as a *matter of course*. This facility for an enterprise of so daring and violent a character, exhibits a fearful state of feeling amongst the lower orders of the Scottish metropolis at that period. But indeed the mobs of Scotland have at all times been remarkable for their ferocity and courage.

The "Heart of Midlothian" is perhaps at once the most elaborate and most perfect of all the Scottish novels, as respects the multiplicity and variety of characters introduced, and the complete development of them. Each of the leading characters is a study by itself; they are of all grades, from the monarch to the footpad, and the contrast into which they are brought is in the last degree striking and effective. Were we desired to give an example of the creative power of Scott's mind, we would enumerate the personages in this novel; for, as we have remarked of "Old Mortality," there is scarcely one expletive or unnecessary character introduced even amongst the many subordinates; all contribute to the progress and animation of the story. Even the episodic digressions are all masterly strokes,—as witness the fearful death-bed scene of Old Dumbiedykes, which might have been perfectly well dispensed with, so far as the main story is concerned. It is said that one of the farewell advices of the old miser to his son Jock,"—"aye to be sticking in a tree when he had naething else to do, it would be growing when he was sleeping"—made such an impression on a northern earl as induced him to plant a large tract of country.

Amongst Scott's *miscellaneous* writings in 1818, we may notice the essays on "Chivalry," and the "Drama," published in the supplement to the Encyclopedia Britannica; also his account of the Regalia of Scotland, (published in a pamphlet,) which were discovered on the 4th of February, same year, in the old crown-room of Edinburgh castle, lying in the same state in which they had been deposited in 1707. A commission had been issued to the crown-officers of state in Scotland, and other persons in public situations, to search for these ancient insignia of Scottish independence, whose place of concealment or security had been doubted for more than half a century. Amongst the latter was "Walter Scott, Esq."

"A third series of "Tales of My Landlord" appeared in 1819, in four volumes, consisting of two tales, "The Bride of Lammermoor,"

and the "Legend of Montrose." The first of these works is in the highest style of fictitious composition, whether poetry or prose. It is essentially dramatic, and may indeed be termed a tragedy of the first order. There is an atmosphere of horror spread over the whole, like the portentous gloom of an impending thunder-cloud, which we feel assured, with shuddering certainty, *must* burst, and spread death and desolation around it. We perceive from the very first that there can be no hope of the story terminating auspiciously; the characters are doomed; the progress of worldly events is all ordinary and natural, yet they seem to be impelled by an irremediable fate to contribute to the tragic issue. We can call to mind no tale in which the common occurrences of rational life are interwoven with the predications of destiny and the omens of superstition, with so little offence to reason; and the secret of this is, that there is no *immediate* supernatural agency employed to direct the incidents of the narrative. There is no casting of witch-spells, or other preternatural influences to control human action. All has been previously set down in the book of destiny. The hag Ailsie Gourly, with "witch" stamped on every feature of her *ugly* face, is allowed to exert no powers but those of a malicious and misanthropic mind, in her fiendish occupation of warping the reason and crushing the heart of her unfortunate victim Lucy; and even the ghastly apparition of old Alice is but an indicative shadow of coming events. It is in this respect that the communion of the three hateful hags in the tale appears to us a far more masterly and impressive delineation than that of Shakspeare's weird sisters, with whom they have generally been compared. The latter are not so much witches as spirits, "bubbles of the air," appearing and disappearing at pleasure; while the compounding of their hell-broth, with their anile jabbering about pilots' thumbs, killing swine, and all the other commonplaces of the nursery demonophobia; can only make an impression on highly imaginative or highly ignorant minds. But Annie Winnie and her confederates, with all their evil passions, and their half pretensions to and general imputation of evil power, still retain the attributes of the human form, and that in its most helpless state; and it is therefore that their foul gloating over the dead-dole—their regarding the master with a sort of affection in consideration of his making a "bonny corpse"—and the bitter enmity they cherish towards the whole human race—raise in us "emotions both of rage and fear;" and although we heartily approve of Johnny Mortcloth exercising his *souple* on the backs of the "damned hags," we expect no less than that the old man will be found dead in his bed next morning for his presumption.

Caleb Balderstone has been generally objected to by the critics. One has called him a bore—another a buffoon, and so forth. It is

perhaps our own obtuseness that prevents our seeing his character in this light; but we confess that the picture of the old man striving in the midst of penury and desolation to maintain the "dignity and honour o' the house," himself seemingly living upon nothing but recollections of former grandeur and profusion, is to us not only one of the most natural, but most affecting of all Scott's delineations. Lady Ashton is exactly another Countess of Glenallen, in as far as the author lets us into the character of the latter. It is now pretty well known that the tragic incidents of the tale are drawn from actual circumstances which took place about the time specified in the family of Dalrymple, of which the present Earl of Stair is the representative. The original of Lady Ashton was the wife of the celebrated Scottish lawyer, the first lord Stair. She died at a great age, and her coffin was, at her request, placed upright in the family burying vault in Kirkliston church,—as she promised, that while she remained in that position, the Dalrymples should continue to prosper. Certainly her ladyship has hitherto kept her promise. In the introductory chapter to the tale, the assumed author, Mr. Pattieson, makes a Mr. Tinto, an itinerant painter, throw out a suggestion which the *real* author, we believe, had little idea at the time would ever be adopted—namely, "an ornamented and illustrated edition of the 'Tales of My Landlord' with vignettes," &c. The scene of the conversation is, of course, the Wallace Inn, in the village of Gandercleugh, and Mr. Tinto is described to have painted, as an appropriate sign for My Landlord, "the majestic head of Sir William Wallace, grim as when severed from the trunk by the orders of the felon Edward." A friend of Scott afterwards took the liberty of asking him whether he meant felon in the common acceptance of the English word, or if it was a mis-spelling of the printer for the old Scottish word *felloun*, fierce or ruthless. "I leave the orthoepy entirely to you," answered Scott, "only begging you will spell the felon as *feloniously* as possible!" It may be imagined that the patriotic feeling of indignation which still subsists against the destroyer of our national records and of our immortal patriot, glowed with no ordinary warmth in the bosom of our author.

The "Legend of Montrose" is a shred of British history during the turbulent era of the seventeenth century, when the gallant but revengeful and ambitious Montrose made such a formidable and unexpected diversion in Scotland in favour of Charles I., which, after the winning of six successive battles, terminated in the complete overthrow of the royalists at Philiphaugh, near Selkirk, on the 11th September 1645. The tale, however, only traces his career as far as his victory at Inverlochy, over his hereditary enemy Argyle. The narrative is sketchy and brief, but more vigorous and animated than the generality

of Scott's works, and we certainly think it is to be regretted that he did not extend his plan, and deal with that era as he has with those of the persecution and the rebellions of 1715 and 1745. Of plot there is none—for the "love passages" betwixt Monteath and Annot Lyle cannot be termed such. *Ranald of the Mist* and *Allan Macaulay* are somewhat too poetical and dramatic for a prose tale, and the bet about the candlesticks (although founded on fact) is worthy the madness of the latter. The jocky club would have black-balled him.

Ritt-master Dugald Dalgetty, titular of Drumthwacket, is perhaps the greatest original of all Scott's creations. He is a character entirely *sui generis*. The idea of combining the *soldado* with the divinity student of Mareschal College, Aberdeen, has no parallel in the writings of any author, ancient or modern. He undoubtedly belongs to the family of *boreds*, but he is the king of the species: we cannot have enough of him. In no where has Scott shown more affinity to the matchless spirit who brought out his *Falstaffs* and *Pistols*, in act after act, and play after play, and exercised them every time with scenes of unbounded loquacity, without either exhausting their humour, or varying a note from its characteristic tone, than in the interminable verbosity of the redoubted Ritt-master. It is a singular fact, that whilst drawing this masterly character, Scott was stretched on a bed of sickness, and racked with spasms of the most acute pain. So severe indeed was his illness—the first indisposition he had experienced since his sixteenth year—that, as mentioned in a previous chapter, his hair turned quite gray, and he rose from his couch seemingly ten years older than when he laid down.\* We are not aware that any definite name can be given to Scott's illness at this time, when manifested itself in severe stitches in the side and cramps in the stomach. His sufferings, however, did not interrupt his career of mental labour otherwise than by reducing him to the necessity of employing an amanuensis, to whom he dictated from bed. Mr. William Laidlaw, who acted in this capacity, mentioned afterwards to a friend, that Scott would sometimes be interrupted in one of his most humorous or elevated scenes by an attack of pain; which, being past, he would recommence in the same tone at the point

\* A characteristic anecdote is told of the late Lord Buchan, in reference to this illness of our author. His lordship, who, with many amiable virtues, possessed a full equivalent of amiable weaknesses, conceiving Scott to be dying, waited upon Mrs. Scott, and begged her to intercede with her illustrious husband to allow himself to be buried in Dryburgh Abbey. "The place" said his lordship, "is very beautiful—just such a place as the poet loves, and as he has a fine taste that way, he is sure of being gratified with my offer." Scott smiled when told of the circumstance, and promised to give Lord Buchan the refusal since he was so solicitous. His lordship, however, took up his last lodging in the abbey long before his illustrious neighbour.



where he left off, and so on day after day. The "Bride of Lammermoor," "Legend of Montrose," and greater part of "Ivanhoe," thus dictated, were afterwards found to be the only parts of this long series of compositions not in the author's own hand writing.

"In "Ivanhoe," which, in 1820, succeeded the third series of the "Tales of my Landlord," Scott broke ground which had never before been disturbed by a literary ploughshare. The scene was away back into the twilight regions of romance, amongst personages, whose characters, if not whose very existence, were so indistinctly known as to be almost mythological. That there were such individuals as Cœur-de-Lion, and his brother John, we understand from history; but what knew we of their domestic character, or their habits and deportment in private life,—or of the manners, dress, occupations and customs of the population of England, during the twelfth century, except what could be gleaned from the relics of old ballads which have been handed down to us? We cannot take it upon us to say that Scott has given a strictly accurate historical view of the condition of society, or the personages and customs of the dark era—for where could he find materials for doing so, or we for judging of the attempt? He has rather evoked a world of his own. It is like an *age* added to the cycle of British history. And yet, notwithstanding the freshness and novelty of his creations in character and incident, how readily do they re-awaken our early notions of those primitive times, which we derived from the rhymes of the nursery, and other sources which we have long lost sight of! We believe there is not one reader who did not at once recognise in the King Richard, the Robin Hood, and the Friar Tuck of the novel, the very personages familiar to his boyish fancy, and associated indelibly with his earliest recollections.

Scott's reasons for selecting so novel and difficult a subject for the exercise of his pen, he has explained at length in the introduction to the late edition of the novel. "He felt," he says, "that in confining himself to subjects purely Scottish, he was not only likely to weary out the indulgence of his readers, but also greatly to limit his own power of affording them pleasure. In a highly polished country, where so much genius is monthly employed in catering for public amusement, a fresh topic, such as he had himself had the happiness to light upon, is the untasted spring of the desert:—

'Men bless their stars, and call it luxury.'

But when men and horses, cattle, camels, and dromedaries, have poached the spring into mud, it becomes loathsome to those who at

first drink of it with rapture, and he who had the merit of discovering it, if he would preserve his reputation with the tribe, must display his talent by a fresh discovery of untasted fountains." This is the severest reflection upon his literary imitators; which we find in all Scott's writings; and the occasion of it was this:—In order to render his experiment upon a subject purely English as complete as possible, it was Scott's intention to have brought out "*Ivanhoe*" as the effort of a new candidate for public favour, by name Lawrence Templeton, in order that no degree of prejudice, whether favourable or the reverse, might attach to it as a new production of the author of *Waverley*. This design, however, was marred by the appearance of a novel, (which it is needless farther to notice,) in London, purporting to be a fourth series of "*Tales of My Landlord*;" in consequence of which, Scott's publishers reckoned it absolutely necessary that "*Ivanhoe*" should come out as an avowed continuation of the *Waverley* novels. Mr. Templeton's dedicatory epistle to the Rev. Dr. Dryasdust, was, nevertheless, retained as a preface to the novel, as explaining the author's purpose and opinions in undertaking this new species of composition.

"*Ivanhoe*" is by far the most brilliant of all Scott's romances. It is, in fact, a splendid poem, or rather masque, and the author's unrivalled powers of description make the whole pass before our eyes like a living pageant. The storming of Front-de-Bœuf's castle, (dictated as we have before stated, from his bed, and amid short intervals of respite from acute pain,) is entirely worthy of the minstrel of Flodden field,—and higher praise cannot be bestowed. Yet eminently successful as was this novel attempt of Scott, there can be little doubt that it does not keep the same hold on the public mind as his more *homely* compositions,—his *Waverleys*, *Antiquaries*, and *Old Mortalities*,—which render us acquainted with our neighbours and ourselves, and depict the virtues, follies, prejudices, passions, habits, and affections, by which we are hourly instructed, governed, or cheered.

Immediately upon the publication of *Ivanhoe*, early in 1820, Scott was called up to London to receive from his sovereign the honour of knighthood, with a baronetcy. This testimonial of royal favour was peculiarly flattering, on several accounts. It was the first honour of the kind which his majesty had conferred since his accession to the throne in the preceding year. As prince of Wales, he had distinguished our author by many personal proofs of his admiration, his fine taste (which even his worst enemies must concede to him) enabling him fully to appreciate the rarity and splendour of the poet's genius. Accordingly, in his numerous visits to the metropolis, Scott was generally honoured with an invitation to the royal table, where he experienced the most marked attentions. Another source of gratification

on the present occasion was, that the honour was as unexpected as unsought. A friend who had got notice of his intended elevation to the baronetage, shortly before it took place, hinted it to him one day,—"More than I know of then," replied Scott, with his peculiarly quiet ironical smile:—"No, no,

'I like not the grinning honour which *Sir Walter* hath."

It was upon the occasion of this visit to the metropolis, also, that Chantrey executed that noble bust of the poet—the only strictly characteristic likeness of him we have ever seen, either in marble, clay, or copper—which will link the sculptor's name and fame with his, as imperishably, though somewhat more worthily, as that of Boswell with Johnson. Mr. Allan Cunningham, who then, as now, superintended Mr. Chantrey's extensive establishment, has favoured us with an account of this transaction, as well as of his own interviews with Scott, to whom he was then, for the first time, introduced.

Scott's attention had been first attracted to the fine quality of Cunningham's genius by the appearance of several matchless ballads which were published in "*Cromek's Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*." Although given to the world as relics of the olden time, they could not deceive the practised eye of Scott, who wrote to the editor requesting to know where he had picked up effusions of such singular beauty. Cromek, who seems to have had no suspicion of any trick having been passed upon him, replied, that they had been communicated to him by Mr. Allan Cunningham, a young stone-mason\* at Dumfries. The result of this information was, we believe, a letter from

\* Mr. Cunningham was then about twenty years of age. It has been remarked, that genius often runs in families, and that of Mr. C. is an exemplification of the remark. Mr. Thomas Mouncey Cunningham, the eldest brother, who has been for many years superintendent of the Messrs. Rennies' (engineers) establishment in London, exhibited extraordinary precociousness of poetic talent; and we have seen many of his juvenile pieces in MS., most of them written ere his fourteenth year, which his riper years need not be ashamed to own. He contributed largely to the "*Forest and Nithsdale Minstrels*," and to the *Scots Magazine* in the earlier years of the present century; and his effusions are distinguished by a chastity, simplicity, and pathos, which, we do not scruple to say, would have rendered him a much more popular poet, had he persevered, than even his eminent brother. He seems, however, to have fairly renounced the service of the muses. Mr. Peter Cunningham, the youngest of the brothers, now a surgeon in the royal navy, has also manifested no mean literary talent, by his excellent and useful work on New South Wales. The father of the Messrs. Cunningham was originally a farmer in Galloway, and latterly factor to Mr. Miller of Dalswinton. He was a man of remarkable sagacity and strength of judgment.

Scott to the young poet, expressive of the highest admiration of his poetic talent, to which he made no scruple in assigning the paternity of the effusions which had made so great an impression on him. Mr. Cunningham has never, we believe, openly acknowledged the authorship of these pieces, deterred probably by the outcry which was raised against Chatterton and others for *offences* of a similar kind. But we believe we may assure him, in the name of the public, that such hesitation is as fruitless as misplaced. He has long been identified as their author, and his countrymen regard the imposture (if so harsh a term can be applied) with much the same sort of feelings as they do that of Burns in his exquisite contributions to Johnson's Museum. We may remark by the way, from our certain means of knowing, that Mr. Cunningham has never received half the credit he was entitled to in the getting up Mr. Cromek's publication; and that so far as the trouble of collecting, comparing, and arranging the materials is concerned, the work ought rather to have issued in his name than in that of the ostensible editor.

After completing his apprenticeship, Mr. Cunningham came to Edinburgh, where he wrought for some years at his employment,—but at this time his country had nearly lost for ever the benefit of his future literary labours. He received an advantageous offer to go out to the West Indies, under indentures for a certain term, (still a very common transaction with mechanics,) “but the gentleman,” said Mr. Cunningham to the writer of these pages, “laid down such a catalogue of virtues I must possess to fit me for crossing the Atlantic, that I told him he would require to have a man made specially for his purpose, as assuredly he would find no ordinary mortal qualified to suit him!” Mr. Cunningham afterwards went to London, where he maintained himself for some years by his pen, contributing (amongst other periodicals) to the Monthly Magazine, under the reversed appellation of “Naila,” and to Blackwood's Magazine. Amongst his pieces in the latter publication, we may mention “The Witch of AE,” and “Mark Macrabin the Cameronian,” the latter of which tales is enriched with some of the most spirited and characteristic outpourings of his muse. He ultimately obtained his present situation in Mr. Chantrey's establishment, where, amidst the discharge of duties laborious and responsible in no ordinary degree, his literary industry and profusion have become every year more remarkable.

It has, we see, become a fashion of late to rank Mr. Cunningham along with Burns and Hogg in the list of what are called *self-taught poets*. Such a classification is in every respect absurd. Setting aside the paradox implied in the phrase, that a poet can be reared by any sort of tuition independent of the promptings of natural genius, we say that

neither Robert Burns nor Allan Cunningham can, strictly speaking, be considered as self-taught men. Both of them enjoyed a better elementary initiation into the rudiments of education than the majority of the Scottish peasantry, almost all of whom receive instruction sufficient to put those who are inclined in the path of self-improvement, and the acquisition of knowledge. Burns was even taught the rudiments of Latin and French; and, in fact, had all the education which his future station in society required. Hogg, on the other hand, by being reared in a wild upland country, was deprived, for the most part, of these advantages, and the epithet of "self-taught" may with some propriety be applied to him. Mr. Cunningham, while the quality of his genius bears no affinity whatever to that of his two celebrated countrymen, has, in one sense, stepped far beyond either. Their fame, with posterity, will rest upon those productions which first brought them into public notice, but Mr. Cunningham, from being a simple writer of songs and ballads, has elevated himself into the rank of pure classical English writers. The genius of Burns sank under the pressure of the necessary drudgery of life. Hogg has never been able to divest himself of his original rusticity of thought and feeling,—and, speaking of him as a poet, we know not how far this is to be regretted. But Cunningham has fought his way into the foremost ranks of the literary ornaments of the age, still preserving all the romance and poetry of his youthful feelings fresh and untainted. This achievement is to be attributed to his more correct views of life, and the superior strength of the moral principle within him. He has not been satisfied with the possession or reputation of mere talent. He felt that even genius might be cultivated, and has subjected his own to a course of discipline which has at once strengthened his faculties and dignified his character.

It may be imagined that Scott did not lose sight of the young Nithsdale poet. On the contrary, he watched with interest the progress of his career, and sent him many flattering and friendly communications in reference to his (Mr. C.'s) various literary attempts. The following account of Mr. Cunningham's first interview with the then great unknown in 1820, we give in his own words:—

"When I went to Sir Walter's residence in Piccadilly, I had much of the same palpitation of heart which Boswell experienced when introduced to Johnson. When I saw him in Edinburgh, (1808,) he was in the very pith and flush of life,—even, in my opinion, a thought more fat than bard beseems; when I looked on him now, thirteen years had not passed over him, and left no mark behind: his hair was grown thin and gray; the stamp of years and study was on his brow. He told me he had suffered much lately from ill health, and that he once doubted

of recovery. His eldest son, a tall handsome youth,—now a major in the army, was with him. He welcomed me with both hands, and with such kind and complimentary words, that confusion and fear alike fled. He turned the conversation upon song, and said he had long wished to know me, on account of some songs, which were reckoned old, but which he was assured were mine; ‘at all events,’ said he, ‘they are not old,—they are far too good to be old: I dare say you know what songs I mean?’ I was now much embarrassed; I neither owned the songs nor denied them, but said I hoped to see him soon again, for that, if he were willing to sit, my friend, Mr. Chantrey, was anxious to make his bust,—as a memorial to preserve in his collection of the author of ‘Marmion.’ To this he consented. So much was he sought after while he sat to Chantrey, that strangers begged leave to stand in the sculptor’s galleries, to see him as he went in and out. The bust was at last finished in marble; the sculptor laboured most anxiously, and I never saw him work more successfully: in a long sitting of three hours, he chiseled the whole face over, communicating to it the grave humour and comic penetration for which the original was so remarkable. This fine work is now at Abbotsford, with an inscription, saying, it is a present to Sir Walter Scott from Francis Chantrey, I hope it will never be elsewhere.”\*

“When I next saw Sir Walter, King George was about to be crowned,† and he had come to London to make one in the ceremony. This was an affair that came within the range of his taste, and when he called on me, he talked of the magnificent scene which Westminster Abbey would present on the morrow, and inquired if I intended to go and look at it. I said I had no curiosity that way, having, when I was young, witnessed the crowning of King Crispin at Dumfries. He burst into a laugh and said, ‘that’s not unlike our friend Hogg: I asked him if he would accompany me, and he stood balancing the matter between the coronation and St. Boswell’s fair, and at last the fair carried it.’”

We may here mention that Scott subsequently used his influence with the “Kings” of Leadenhall street, in obtaining appointments in the East India Company’s service for two of Mr. Cunningham’s sons.

Immediately after Scott’s return from London in 1820, in the character of baronet, the number of his domestic circle was reduced by the

\* Mr. Cunningham somewhere mentions that of this bust, two thousand casts were in one year shipped to America, and fifteen hundred to the West Indies, besides multitudes to other parts of the world.

† July 19th, 1821.

marriage of his eldest daughter Sophia, (April 28th) to John Gibson Lockhart, Esq., advocate. Mr. Lockhart, as is perhaps well known, is the son of the Rev. John Lockhart, minister of the college-church, Glasgow. He received his early education in his native city, and distinguished himself so much in various branches of study, that he was chosen one of the two students which the college of Glasgow has a right to send annually to Oxford, to be there educated and maintained free of expense upon what is termed "Snell's Foundation." After completing his academical course, Mr. Lockhart came to Edinburgh, where he studied for the bar; but his mind was perhaps formed on too classical a model to fit him for jostling his way amongst the host of hungry competitors with whom he had to strive. At the time of his marriage with Miss Scott, and for several years, indeed both before and afterwards, he maintained himself, we believe, solely by the labours of his pen, amongst which we need only mention "Valerius," "Adam Blair," and "Matthew Wald." He was also, it is well known, one of the earliest and most effective contributors to "Blackwood's Magazine," started in 1817—a periodical now unrivaled amongst our monthly publications. In 1825, Mr. Lockhart was appointed to the editorship of the London Quarterly Review, which he has since conducted with distinguished success.

"Ivanhoe," we have said, came out in the early part of 1820. In a few months afterwards appeared "The Monastery," in three volumes, and that work again was followed by "The Abbot," in three volumes—all in the same year. A certain Captain Clutterbuck is made to stand god-father to these productions, whose introductory epistle to the "Author of Waverley" contains in itself a little story of the deepest interest. The former of these works is decidedly of a much tamer cast than the majority of the author's writings, although we believe its comparative unpopularity resulted chiefly from the unfavourable contrast it presented to the stately splendour of its immediate predecessor. The supernatural agency of the White Lady has been almost universally condemned; and Scott himself, indeed, afterwards acknowledged the attempt to be a failure—but more in the execution than the conception. Waiving this contested point, we reckon the narrative otherwise only objectionable from the defectiveness of plot, of which we would be at a loss to say what it is intended to develop—the fate of the house of Avenel—the fortunes of young Glendinning—or the progress of the reformation. In character it abounds; the indolent, good-natured Abbot of St. Mary's, the talented and zealous Sub-Prior, Henry Warden, Julian Avenel, his henchmen Christie—all are admirable delineations. The meeting between the Sub-Prior and the Reformer is one of the most masterly drawn scenes in all Scott's productions.

Nothing can be finer than the transition from the period of the narrative of this work to that of "The Abbot," which forms a continuation of it. We pass, as it were, by a step from the fresh spring of youth to the summer of manhood, and are made sensible of all the casualties, changes, and deprivations, which chequer the progress of human existence. The person, deportment and manner of the unfortunate Queen Mary are sketched with admirable power, and at the same time with strict fidelity to the dubious light which history affords to judge of her character,—fascinating us with her beauty, wit, and accomplishments, yet leaving untouched the fearful mystery which hangs over many passages of her unhappy life. The transformation of the jolly Abbot Boniface into the aged, doting, and peevish gardener Blinkhoolie, is a conception which could only have emanated from a genius like Scott's.

We regret that our duty as biographers here compels us to advert to an incident in Scott's life, which even at this distance of time cannot fail to call up many irritating recollections in the public mind. The era of 1820 will long be remembered for the unhappy popular disturbances which broke out in various parts of the kingdom. The severe and universal distress which then prevailed, and the unpopularity of government, had as usual led to the renewal of agitation for parliamentary reform. Without entering into the merits of this question, we may safely remark, that if there were amongst the popular leaders at that time many demagogues, whose sole aim was to produce confusion in the state, the contemptuous disregard manifested by government to the complaints and solicitations of the people, contributed equally with the pangs of famine to exasperate their feelings almost to a pitch of frenzy. We need only allude to the memorable "Cato-street conspiracy," and the affair at Bonnymuir, to call to the recollection of our readers the unhappy condition of society at that time. The popular press began to assume a tone of boldness which it had never before dared to use, and which it was found utterly unable to repress by the usual legal expedients. With the view of counteracting the efforts of these "radical" prints, Scott inserted three papers entitled "The Visionary" into the Edinburgh Weekly Journal newspaper, (then published by Mr. Ballantyne,) and which were disseminated extensively throughout the country in the form of a pamphlet. Although we cannot question the good motives of the author of these effusions, yet it is certain the tone and temper of them were in the highest degree injudicious, and they may be quoted as amongst the worst specimens of that high tory principle in politics which has since become in a manner exploded,—treating the advocates of parliamentary reform as a set of raving fanatics, or traitorous incendiaries, and addressing long argu-



ments to the people which manifested the most entire ignorance of, or indifference to, their real feelings and motives. About the same time, and in order to neutralize the efforts of the more able radical journals, whose violence and personality had certainly reached a point which it would be difficult in any circumstances to justify, a few private and professional tory gentlemen conceived the idea of establishing a newspaper of their own. Of this association Scott became a member, and his name along with those of many individuals of the first character and influence, was afterwards found subscribed to a mutual co-partnery bond. The "Beacon," as it was called, accordingly began to be published about the beginning of 1821; but although the avowed object of it was to support the measures of government, it speedily began to outstrip the most scurrilous of its opponents in the system of private abuse and defamation. This course soon gave rise to numerous actions at law, and differences of a serious nature between individuals in the most respectable circles of society; and the outcry against the journal became so general and vehement, that the supporters of it shrunk from the storm, and it was finally stopped in September the same year.\*

Scott was severely blamed for his connection with the "Beacon," but it is only justice to his memory to state, that whilst he openly espoused the *political principles* of the paper, he disclaimed all countenance of the personal scurrilities introduced into it, and in fact was one of the first to intimate his intention of withdrawing from the confederacy, when he perceived the system adopted by its conductors.

So strongly, however, had popular prejudice been stirred up against him, that a report actually found its way into the London papers, of his house being attacked, and his person and family maltreated by the peasantry of the district. This ridiculous rumour was instantly contradicted by the editor of a provincial journal; and the following letter, referring thereto, we think ourselves, for more reasons than one, imperatively called upon to insert here. It is now in our possession, and is addressed to a friend in Edinburgh, who had sent Scott a copy of the newspaper, and of a letter from the friendly journalists on the subject.

"Sir W. Scott's compliments to Mr. —, and encloses Mr. —'s letter and newspaper, whose good sense so readily anticipated the silly hoax which appeared in the London papers. Sir Walter Scott thinks

\* We need hardly remind our readers that it was owing to some defamatory articles which appeared in the "Beacon," and were continued in the Glasgow "Sentinel," a paper which seemed to spring from the ashes of the other, that the rencontre took place on the 26th March, 1822, betwixt Mr. Stewart, of Dunearn, and his relative, Sir Alexander Boswell, of Auchinleck, in which the latter was killed.

he would have bestowed the greater part of his annual income to little purpose, if he could not have found among twenty or thirty sturdy labourers, whom he employs daily, as much for their sake as his own pleasure, enough to protect his house at any time, and against any person whatsoever, especially as it was only last January, that upwards of one hundred young fellows, all of the labouring class, offered him their service to form a company of sharpshooters, had the continuation of the bad prospects then in the horizon rendered such assistance necessary. The enclosed is a copy of the thanks which Sir Walter Scott thought it necessary to return on the occasion."

The address to the young volunteers was written in Scott's happiest style, and we regret that, from its length, we are debarred from inserting it here.

"Kenilworth" appeared in January 1821, in three volumes; thus making with "Ivanhoe," "The Monastery," and "The Abbot," twelve volumes of these splendid fictions, which if not written, were at least published, in as many months! Such amazing profusion might well suggest the fear of speedy exhaustion, and the critics who then thought they could discern symptoms of decay in every fresh novel, might almost be pardoned their ungrounded suspicions. "Kenilworth" must be ranked next to "Ivanhoe" in splendour of description, and presents almost as singular a contrast to the homely Scottish novels. It was now evident that the author who, in the latter, seemed to have dwelt all his life among our Dinmonts, and Deanses, and Headriggs, had, on the contrary, been trained up amid all the pomp and circumstance of courts. He moves through that of Elizabeth like one who had conversed all his life with its Raleighs, its Burleighs, and its Shakspeares, and to have watched every glance and attitude of the maiden queen. In depicting the subordinates, too, the author displays a far more felicitous power than even Shakspeare himself, who, whatever may be said of his heroes, makes his plebeians, whatever country or age they belong to, little else than veritable English clowns of his own time. But Scott throws us amongst classes of people to whose habits of life and ways of thinking we were previously entire strangers, yet with whom we become quite familiar in the emptying of a flagon: and in the work before us we sit down at the board of honest Giles Gosling, with the jolly landlord himself, master Goldthred the silk-mercener from Abingdon, and Mike Lambourne—newly arrived from cutting throats abroad, and ready to renew his occupation for good pay at home—as if they had been all old acquaintances. We have one objection to allege against this tale; and the fault is a somewhat sin-

gular one for a Scotsman to fall into—and which moreover we, as Scotsmen, will perhaps get little credit for candour in pointing out:—the maiden queen is drawn in much too amiable a light. History warrants us in assigning her much more of the masculine and much less of the feminine qualities than Scott has been pleased to endow her with; and he seems to have had the splendour of her reign rather than her domestic conduct in his eye, while sketching her character. It is scarce needful to observe that Leicester also has been transformed from an imbecile and unprincipled sycophant, as he actually was, into an able though ambitious statesman, who excites both our admiration and sympathy.

Betwixt January and May 1822, appeared other two tales, “The Pirate” and the “Fortunes of Nigel,” in three volumes each. The materials for the first of these had been collected so far back as the year 1814, during the short tour which Scott made through the Hebrides, to select suitable localities for his “Lord of the Isles.” It was one of the chief causes of Scott’s success, and demonstrates at the same time the bold originality of his genius, that he occasionally selected subjects for his pen the most difficult of access, and to which the reading world had previously been almost entire strangers. In “The Pirate,” he has described the Zetlanders to the life, before they became assimilated in feeling to their Scottish neighbours,—their maritime furniture and food,—their insular language, ideas, prejudices, and superstitions:—

• • • • “nothing of them  
But doth suffer a sea-change—”

according to the highly appropriate motto of the work. He has also painted, with his characteristic vividness, all the natural features of that remote region—the rocky promontory, the capricious climate, the irresistible tempest, the *roost*, the *haaf* and the *voe*. In short, Scott stamped immediate notoriety on a country and people hitherto almost unknown, and to which even Dr. Johnson had failed to attract any general attention. The hospitable old Udaller, a sort of Cedric in his way, is an admirable portrait; and Minna and Brenda are amongst the finest creations of the author’s pen. The account of the family of the Yellowleys, is, to our mind, equal to any thing in Fielding or Smollett. The Pirate, Cleveland, is a failure—inconsistent and ill sustained; nor does Norna herself leave a very favourable impression on our mind, although the attempted parallel between her and Meg Merrilies by some critics of eminence, only showed how naturally an ill-timed effort at unusual cleverness lapses into absurdity.

The "Fortunes of Nigel" is perhaps behind nothing the author ever wrote, for dramatic power and masterly portraiture of character. Whatever grave historians have said, or may say, of King James' person and deportment, they can never do away with the associations which Scott's impersonation of him has conjured up. He will continue to fidget and fret and sputter, and amble about upon his *rollicking* legs, to the amusement of all posterity. Scott had the prudence not to touch upon his administrative exhibitions of "king-craft," which will far less bear handling than any of the acts of his unfortunate successor. It is curious enough, however, that the author has, in this novel, failed most palpably in the character to which he wished to attach the greatest interest—that, namely, of George Heriot, who is certainly a much less striking personage than either Sir Mungo Malagrowth, or Richie Monyplies, or even Martha Trapbois.

During the summer, succeeding the appearance of these two works, the attention of the Scottish public was diverted from the enjoyment of them by a circumstance scarcely less novel to them than the appearance of the author of Waverley himself. This was the visit of his majesty King George IV. to his northern metropolis. Upon this occasion the eyes of the public authorities of Auld Reekie naturally turned upon Sir Walter Scott, who, as the personal friend of his sovereign, and from his acquaintance with the pomp and ceremonials customary on such exhibitions, seemed to them best fitted for superintending the preparations for so momentous and unusual an event, as well as for acting as a kind of *dragoman* between the monarch and his subjects. To these necessary duties Scott lent himself with a zeal, which, while it contributed most essentially to the orderliness, spirit and dignity of all the proceedings, and drew forth the warm and well-merited thanks of his coadjutors in the getting up of the various pageants, obtained him, as frequently happens in such cases, little credit with either of the parties chiefly concerned—the sovereign and the people. The latter unaware of the multiplicity and responsible nature of the duties devolved upon him, conceived that he made himself too officious about the king's person, and manifested an overweening anxiety to push himself forward into the gaze and observation of the public. The cause of his sovereign's dissatisfaction will be afterwards noticed.

When the royal squadron anchored in Leith Roads on the afternoon of the 14th August, Scott was one of a distinguished party who were the first to pay their respects to his majesty. When the latter heard that our author was alongside, he exclaimed, "What! Sir Walter Scott! The man in Scotland I most wished to see! Let him come up." Scott accordingly ascended, and was received in the most flattering

manner by his majesty, who was stationed on the quarter-deck. Amongst his other duties, Scott had been deputed by the ladies of Scotland to present to the king a St. Andrew's cross formed of pearls, the produce of Scotland, and executed in the most costly style of workmanship; and he took the present opportunity of presenting his gift, which was received with all graciousness by the king, who afterwards detained him on board to dinner, making him sit on his right hand. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the various festivities, which took place during the period of his majesty's residence in Scotland, in most of which Scott bore a conspicuous part. Indeed, the king manifested so marked a predilection for his company, that he was in a manner forced to obtrude himself on the public notice, with a frequency totally at variance with his characteristic modesty and retiring disposition. At the royal banquet given in the parliament house, he was selected in preference to all the noble and wealthy there assembled, to act as vice-chairman. On this occasion the health of "Sir Walter Scott" was proposed by the Earl of Errol; and afterwards that of the "Author of Waverley," by Lord Ashburton. It is needless to say that to the first of these toasts only did the subject of them make any reply,—and that, as usual, a brief one.

The occasion of his majesty's displeasure with our author, before alluded to, was as follows:—When the positive intelligence had been received at Edinburgh of the approaching royal visit, Scott drew up a sort of programme of the pageants and festivities which would probably be held during his stay, as a sort of guide or manual to the public, who, of course, were entirely ignorant of the ceremonials intended to be observed on so unusual an occasion. Amongst the projected spectacles was a procession in state to the castle, with all the observances customary in the days of Scotland's independence as a monarchy. This arrangement, which was looked forward to with much gratification by the many hundreds of thousands then drawn into Edinburgh from all quarters of Scotland, was, it seems, not communicated to the king until after all the preparations had been made, and when told of it he at once expressed his aversion to the proposal in terms so peremptory as intimated his expectation of being no more importuned on the subject. Dismayed at this unexpected rebuff, the committee of management turned, in their extremity, to Scott, who, as the author of the project, and knowing well the general disappointment that would ensue from its falling through, cheerfully undertook the delicate task of expostulating with his royal master. He accordingly proceeded to Dalkeith palace, but found his mission a much more difficult one than he had anticipated. His majesty, it is said, expressed himself with excessive

bitterness at the disrespect shown to himself in not consulting his wishes in the matter; but Scott stuck to his point, and, in short, bluntly stated that his majesty *must* comply with the projected arrangement. By his respectful firmness, our author at length extorted a reluctant consent; but it was remarked that the king felt so much nettled at the constraint thus put upon his inclination, or rather his prejudices, that he treated Scott with undisguised coolness for some time afterwards; and indeed it was said by some that he never entirely forgave it. His royal ire, however, must have been somewhat mollified before his departure from Edinburgh, as the offender was made the organ of transmitting to some of the public bodies who had "turned out" with truly zealous loyalty, his majesty's grateful sense of the affection they had manifested towards his person. But the affair of the procession was, in more respects than one, an unfortunate one for Scott. On the morning of its taking place, his assistance was of course required at Holyrood to superintend the arrangement of the proceedings. After seeing all things put in proper trim, he left the palace with the intention of privately viewing the pageant from the window of a friend's house in the line of the procession. It happened, however, that in passing up the Canongate, he found the street so blocked up with the crowd, that in order to get along, he was necessitated to take the space kept open on the "crown of the causeway" for the pageant. He thus, in company with his youngest son Charles—one of the king's pages during his royal visit—and another gentleman (his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, we believe) became a most conspicuous object to the assembled multitude, who greeted him with loud cheers. But there were not wanting those who were ready to impute his appearance in such circumstances to a love of ostentation, and to throw out a sneer about "Sir Walter's procession coming before the king's." Scott was too well aware of the misconstruction to which his situation was liable from envious and little minds, and took advantage of the first opening to slip from the gaze and applause of the crowd. He afterwards repeatedly spoke of this circumstance to some of his private friends in terms of the most painful anxiety, evincing how keenly he felt the imputation of exhibiting himself as an object of popular acclamation. We may safely assert, indeed, that never was so much genius associated with so much modesty as in Scott, and we believe there were only two out of the innumerable and flattering tributes to his great name and fame, which he was ever heard to quote with something like complaisance in private conversation. One of these happened on the occasion of King George the Fourth's coronation. Scott had elbowed his way stoutly through the dense multitude for some time on his way

back to his hotel in Abingdon street, with considerable success, but at last got so fast locked up in the crowd, that he was utterly unable to extricate himself. In this dilemma, he solicited the assistance of a sergeant of the Scottish Grays, who was stationed near him. Thinking only of his duty, the soldier shook his head, and coldly replied, "I can give you no assistance, friend." Scott whispered to him, "Can you not help your countryman, Walter Scott?" The soldier's face flushed up in an instant, "Walter Scott!—Yes, sir. By G—d you *shall* have help, whatever happens!" and he immediately sent a suitable escort with his illustrious countryman.

The other complimentary occasion mentioned by Scott is told by Captain Basil Hall in his account of the embarkation of the former for Naples, in the year 1831. One of the officers of the Barham man-of-war had mentioned, that several seamen had entered for service in the vessel, solely in consequence of his going in her. "That's something of a compliment, certainly," observed Scott, "but," continued he, laughing, "I hold that the greatest honour yet paid to my celebrity was by a fishmonger in London last week. Upon my servant applying for some cod for dinner, he found, from its being somewhat late in the day, that there was none to be had; but having accidentally mentioned who it was wanted for, the fishmonger said, that altered the matter, and that if a bit was to be had in London for love or money, it should be at my disposal. Accordingly the man walked up with the fish all the way from Billingsgate to Sussex Place, in the Regent's Park. "Now," said he, "if *that* is not substantial literary reputation, I know not what is!" Perhaps, however, the truest compliment ever paid to his genius was by the poor Paisley weaver, who said, "the only comfort he had in such times of distress was in reading the Author of Waverley's novels."

While upon this subject, we may mention another instance of the magic of Scott's name, for which we have again to acknowledge our obligation to Mr. R. Chambers, who had it directly from the individual concerned in the occurrence, and whose account of it we will give in his own words:—

"Being in London at the time when Sir Walter Scott made researches among the papers of some of the government offices concerning some points in his *Life of Bonaparte*, I happened to be at the Colonial Office one day waiting in an ante-room, when Sir Walter

\* We have to observe, that this and other anecdotes in our memoir, derived from the same source, (unless otherwise noticed, are from the MS. collections of Mr. C. never before published.

came in, and sat down close by the door. Another gentleman entered shortly after, and giving a slight and supercilious glance at the persons already in the apartment, took up his station by the chimney-piece, and occupied himself in examining something that hung upon the wall, as if he did not think his companions worthy of any further attention. I sat in a window looking down Downing street, immediately opposite Sir Walter, and having been previously slightly known to him, it was not long till he recognised and addressed me. He asked, how I liked London? I made some reply, professing my contentment with it; on which Sir Walter said, 'Oh, I dare say you would like to see the hills and waters of the north again, and to get a breath of pure mountain air.' The words were simple in themselves, but they marked his own attachment to home, and they were pronounced in such a tone of kindness as made a deep impression on me, *for Sir Walter spoke to every man as if he had been a blood relation.* I have sometimes amused myself with conjecturing what the gentleman who had turned his back upon us thought of the conversation. Perhaps he despised us as two 'fause Scots,' who *pretended* to retain some traces of affection for our beggarly country, and some wish to return to it. If such were his thoughts, they must have been dispersed in an unexpected manner. An attendant opened the door, and pronounced the magic name 'Sir Walter Scott,' by way of intimation, that Mr. Hay, I believe, would be happy to see the baronet up stairs. Upon this, the stranger, as if he had received a shot, wheeled suddenly round; but, perhaps, the only opportunity he had ever had of seeing that great man, who had made himself known to so many ears, and the friend of so many hearts, was lost. Sir Walter sat very near the door, and was concealed by it ere our companion could obtain a view of him. He gazed for a moment; then turning round about, honoured me with a stare more particular than he had deigned to bestow on his entrance; but having satisfied himself seemingly that he only saw before him a poor Scottish clerk, he resumed consideration of the table of official regulations, which he had previously made the object of study, deeming me entirely beneath *his* notice."

Before proceeding further, it should be mentioned, that immediately after the king's visit, our author was appointed one of the deputy-lieutenants of the county of Roxburgh.

Scott's next work, "Peveril of the Peak," appeared early in 1823, in four bulky volumes. The assumed godfather to this lusty bandling, was the Rev. Jonas Dryasdust himself, whose prefatory letter gives his friend Captain Clutterbuck an account of an unexpected visit from their common parent, at his own mansion in the Castlegate of York.



We shall extract a portion of this epistle, in which Scott has given a very faithful description of his own personal appearance at that time—bating his lameness, which would have been rather too significant a point of identity:—

“The Author of *Waverley* entered, a bulky and tall man, in a traveling greatcoat, which covered a suit of snuff-brown, cut in imitation of that worn by the great Rambler. His flapped hat—for he disdained the modern frivolities of a traveling cap—was bound over his head with a large silk handkerchief, so as to protect his ears from cold at once, and from the babble of his pleasant companions in the public coach, from which he had just alighted. There was somewhat of a sarcastic shrewdness and sense which sat on the heavy pent-house of his shaggy eye-brow,—his features were in other respects largely shaped and rather heavy than promising wit and genius; but he had a notable projection of the nose, similar to that line of the Latin poet—

—‘*Immodicum surgit pro cuspidē rostrum.*’

A stout walking-stick stayed his hand—a double Barcelona protected his neck—his belly was something prominent, ‘but that not much.’ His age seemed to be considerably above fifty, but could not amount to threescore, which I observed with pleasure, trusting there may be a good deal of work got out of him yet; especially as a general haleness of appearance,—the strength and compass of his voice,—the steadiness of his step,—the rotundity of his calf,—the depth of his hem,—and the sonorous emphasis of his sneeze, were all signs of a constitution built for permanence. It struck me forcibly, as I gazed on this portly person, that he realized, in my imagination, the Stout Gentleman in No. II., who afforded such subject of varying speculation to our most amusing and elegant Utopian traveller, Master Geoffrey Crayon.” Having partaken of the substantial refreshments placed before him, ere a word is spoken by his host, with a relish and avidity ‘which would have attracted the envy of a hungry hunter after a fox-chase of forty miles,’ he is complimented by the reverend gentleman on his dexterity as a trencherman. “‘Sir,’ was his reply, ‘I must eat as an Englishman, to qualify myself for taking my place at one of the most select companies of right English spirits which ever girdled in, and hewed asunder, a mountainous sirloin, and a generous plum-pudding.’”

The company here humorously glanced at, was the Roxburghe club of London, who had just then elected him a member of their asso-

ciation, *simply as the Author of Waverley*, without any other designation. The case stood thus: Early in 1823, a vacancy occurred in the Roxburghe club, (which admits only a limited number of members, all of the first distinction, either in rank or talent,) by the death of one of the members, when it was proposed by Earl Spencer, the president, to fill up the vacant chair by the election of the "*Unknown Author of Waverley*." This proposal being agreed to, Dr. Dibbin, the secretary, was requested to address Sir Walter Scott on the subject, and received, in consequence, the two following letters in reply.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I was duly favoured with your letter, which proves one point against the unknown Author of *Waverley*; namely, that he is certainly a Scotsman, since no other nation pretends to the advantage of second sight. Be he who or where he may, he must certainly feel the very high honour which has selected him, *neminis umbra*, to a situation so worthy of envy.

"As his personal appearance in the fraternity is not like to be a speedy event, one may presume he may be desirous of offering some test of his gratitude in the shape of a reprint, or such-like kickshaw, and for this purpose you had better send me the statutes of your learned body, which I will engage to send him in safety.

"It will follow as a characteristic circumstance, that the table of the Roxburghe, like that of king Arthur, will have a vacant chair, like that of Banquo at Macbeth's banquet. But if this author, who 'hath fern-seed and walketh invisible,' should not appear to claim it before I come to London, (should I ever be there again,) with permission of the club, I, who have something of adventure in me, although a knight like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, dubbed with unpacked rapier, and *on carpet* consideration, would rather than lose the chance of a dinner with the Roxburghe Club, take upon me the adventure of the *siege perilous*, and reap some amends for perils and scandals into which the invisible champion has drawn me, by being his *locum tenens* on so distinguished an occasion.

"It will be not uninteresting to you to know, that a fraternity is about to be established here something on the plan of the Roxburghe Club; but, having Scottish antiquities chiefly in view, it is to be called the Bannatyne Club, from the celebrated antiquary, George Bannatyne, who compiled by far the greatest records of old Scottish poetry. The first meeting is to be held on Thursday, when the health of the Roxburghe Club will be drank. I am always, my dear sir, your most faithful humble servant,

"WALTER SCOTT."

"Edinburgh, Feb. 25, 1823."

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am duly honoured with your very interesting and flattering communication. Our Highlanders have a proverbial saying, founded on the traditional renown of Fingal's dog, 'If it is not Bran,' they say, 'it is Bran's brother.' Now this is always taken as a compliment of the first class, whether applied to an actual cur, or parabolically to a biped; and, upon the same principle, it is with no small pride and gratification that the Roxburghe Club have been so very flatteringly disposed to accept me as a *locum tenens* for the unknown author whom they have made the child of their adoption. As sponsor, I will play my part as well as I can: and should the real Simon Pure make his appearance to push me from my stool, why I shall have at least the satisfaction of having enjoyed it.

'They cannot say but what I *had* the crown.'

"Besides, I hope the devil does not owe me such a shame. Mad Tom tells us, that the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman; and this mysterious personage will, I hope, partake as much of his honourable feeling as of his invisibility, and, resuming his incognito, permit me to enjoy, in his stead, an honour which I value more than I do that which has been bestowed on me by the credit of having written any of his novels.

*In* "I regret deeply I cannot soon avail myself of my new privileges; but courts, which I am under the necessity of attending, officially sit down in a few days, and, *hei wih!* do not arise for vacation until July. But I hope to be in town next spring; and certainly I have one strong additional reason for a London journey, furnished by the pleasure of meeting the Roxburghe Club. Make my most respectful compliments to the members at their next merry meeting; and express, in the warmest manner, my sense of obligation. I am always, my dear sir, very much your most obedient servant.

"WALTER SCOTT."

"*Abbotsford, May 1, 1823.*"

It need only be further mentioned in reference to this transaction—so mutually honourable to both parties—that Scott only met their club once at their anniversary in 1825.

A few months after "Peveril of the Peak," appeared "Quentin Durward," in three volumes; a work remarkable for the masterly delineation of the singular character of Louis XI., whom some of his biographers represent as an incarnation of the devil himself. This work was much more popular than many of its predecessors, and greatly extended their author's fame on the continent. Our French

neighbours began to regard him with a sort of national affection, so thoroughly did he appear at home in all that related to their ancient habits and history.

In the following year, 1824, came out "St. Ronan's Well" and "Redgauntlet," in three volumes each. The former was upon a plan entirely new to our author, in as far as it dealt with the scenes and characters of our own times, and where he was of course limited to the region of modern every-day life. Here, therefore, he ventured into a field already crowded with literary competitors of high and deserved fame, and the consequence, as was to be expected, was the onset of the whole hive of southern critics about his ears, each holding forth against him the favourite work of his favourite author, like old Sheriff of Kirkaldy shooting at Satan with the pulpit Bible. All was of no avail, however, for although our English brethren were for a while influenced by the storm of vituperation, the author's own countrymen felt and acknowledged that his right hand had not forgot its cunning. Touchwood and Meg Dods, the clergyman Cargill, and worthy Mrs. Blower from the Bowhead, are amongst his very best characters.

In "Redgauntlet," Scott took his last farewell of the "auld Stuart race,"—although from the sort of lingering affection he seemed to cherish towards that family and their adherents, we fully expected he would have celebrated high mass over the remains of Cardinal York. Scott has, on this account, been charged with Jacobitism; and, indeed, some ninnies have alleged his indulgence of this sentiment in his writings, as his prime reason for keeping his name so long a mystery. These people understand not the characters or feelings of Scotsmen of our author's generation. They were Jacobites in feeling, but not in principle. They cherished towards the exile family only that hereditary veneration for exalted birth so inherent in the national character, mingled with sorrow for their downfall, and regret for the reasons which *necessitated* their expulsion. So felt Scott, both as a Scotsman and a poet,—the latter, as Shenstone fancifully, though perhaps not less justly, observes, being naturally addicted to hereditary attachments—in short, a Tory by nature.\*

\* "As for politics," says the adorer of the Leasowes, "I think poets are Tories by nature, supposing them to be by nature poets. The love of an individual person or family that has worn a crown for many successions is an inclination greatly adapted to the fanciful tribe. On the other hand, mathematicians, abstract reasoners, of no manner of attachment to persons, at least of the visible part of them, but prodigiously devoted to the ideas of virtue, liberty and so forth, are generally *Whigs*."—*Shenstone's Letters*, 1746.

In 1835, came out the "Crusaders," in four volumes, of which the "Talisman" is one of the finest eastern tales in the English language, and shows how easy it is for true genius to overcome the obstacles which space, time, and circumstances can interpose to its flight. The "Betrothed" is a much inferior work, and is thought still more so from the inapplicability of the general title to it. It ought to be called a Romance of the Cymry, rather than a Tale of the Crusades.

In the summer of this year, Sir Walter visited Ireland, accompanied by his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, and his two daughters, Mrs. Lockhart and Miss Scott. Intending this excursion to be quite of a private nature, and chiefly as a visit to his son, Captain Scott of the 15th Hussars, then quartered in Dublin, he gave no little offence to several public bodies, by declining to encounter their eloquence at various splendid entertainments to which he was invited. But although he could avoid the ceremonious and *got-up* courtesies of his Irish admirers, it was not easy to escape from the unstudied, and therefore more gratifying, indications of admiration from the promiscuous crowd. He went to the theatre one night, accompanied by Miss Edgeworth, Mr. Lockhart, and his two daughters. He had not been long in the house when an uproar commenced in the galleries, to the great annoyance of those below—the more so that the repeated cheers which were vollied forth by *the gods* were quite unintelligible to the less exalted part of the audience. At last the *thunder* became so continued and deafening that the actors were proceeding in dumb show: the curtain fell—the manager appeared, and humbly asked the deities what they pleased to want? "Sir Walter Scott!" was the laconic and truly Irish response of some hundreds of voices; and the manager, unaware of the presence of his distinguished visiter, retired quite disconcerted, fancying, doubtless, that the unreasonable *boys* had taken a fancy to have the illustrious author introduced *in character* on his boards. Some quicker wits in the pit, however, caught the hint, and soon distinguished the object of their godships' acclamations: the intelligence spread like wild-fire; the whole house rose with one consent, and greeted him in the most enthusiastic manner. Scott acknowledged as usual in brief terms this flattering and unsophisticated testimony of public admiration, and again sat down amid reiterated plaudits.

Amongst other objects of curiosity, Scott of course visited the tomb of the dean of St. Patrick's, and appeared unwontedly affected whilst gazing on that monument and on the cenotaph on which the name of Stella was engraved. He then examined the library of St. Sepulchre, in the course of which a scene is related to have occurred betwixt himself and the deputy-librarian, which is highly characteristic of the

coolness and caution with which he preserved his incognito relative to the authorship of the Waverley novels. The official, while showing the baronet through the endless squares of folios and streets of quartos, conceived that if he could throw the Great Unknown off his guard, and discover the grand *secret*, he would have a fairer chance for immortality than if he passed the remainder of his life presiding in the guardianship of the bibliothecal progeny committed to his care. With this intent he entered into some familiar conversation with him, and carelessly abandoning the immediate theme, "Do you know, Sir Walter," said he, "that it was only lately I've had time to get through your *Redgauntlet*?"—"Sir," replied Scott, with perfect composure, "I never met with *such* a book." Before leaving Dublin, Scott also visited the widow of the gifted Maturin, and volunteered his influence in getting a tragedy, written by her husband, shortly before his death, brought out on the stage or published for the benefit of his family. This piece, of which the name has escaped us, was afterwards performed on the Dublin boards, but we have not learned that it has ever been published.

After leaving Dublin, he proceeded, accompanied by his friend Miss Edgeworth and his family, on a tour through the lakes of Killarney, and thence to Cork, where the city corporation presented him with the freedom of the town in a silver box. He then returned to Dublin, and after a month's sojourn in the Green Isle, took shipping for Holyhead. The party then proceeded to the lakes of Cumberland, where, with his solemn-souled brother in poesy, Wordsworth, as his guide and companion, our author spent some weeks in contemplating the diversified beauty of the scenery of Mere-land; not forgetting a visit to the author of *Thalaba*, who always held a high place in Scott's estimation. The little party then proceeded homewards, where they arrived in safety and high spirits.

Having now arrived at that phase of Scott's life, when the star of his prosperity may be said to have reached its extreme point of culmination; or, to vary the metaphor, having now seen him placed on the topmost round of Fortune's wheel, we will pause a while to contemplate the high and happy situation to which his splendid genius and prodigious industry, no less than his unprecedented success, had raised him, ere we trace that fatal revolution which precipitated him into an abyss of misfortune, in the effort of extricating himself from which his mighty mind at last sunk.

We cannot introduce this part of our subject better than in our author's own words, where, in the introduction to the late edition of the "*Chronicles of the Canongate*," he takes a sorrowful, yet resigned,

retrospective glance at the height from which he had fallen. "Through the success of my literary efforts," says he, "I had been enabled to indulge some of the tastes which a retired person of my station might be supposed to entertain. In the pen of this nameless romancer, I seemed to possess something like the secret fountain of coined gold and pearls, vouchsafed to the traveller of the Eastern Tale; and no doubt believed that I might venture, without silly imprudence, to extend my personal expenditure considerably beyond what I should have thought of, had my means been limited to the competence which I derived from inheritance, with the moderate income of a professional situation. I bought, and built, and planted, and was considered by myself, as by the rest of the world, in the safe possession of an easy fortune."

We cannot understand very well how Scott came to flatter himself with this idea, for the fact is, that although he must at this time (1825) have been in the annual receipt of some where about £10,000 a year—reckoning the emoluments of his official situations with the average profits of his literary labours—yet he was still in as continual want of ready money as ever, as will be evident from his cash transactions with Ballantyne and Constable, to be afterwards exhibited. From the information of those who had pretty certain means of ascertaining the economy (if it can be so called) of his style of living at this time, we feel warranted in setting down his personal expenses—that is to say, of himself, family, and household in town and country—at £5000 a year; the rest was consumed in the "buying, building and planting" he speaks of above. How he came to consider himself, therefore, in these circumstances, in the possession of an "easy fortune," we are at a loss to imagine, for his territorial acquisitions then yielded a return of not more than £200 or £300 a year. But let this pass in the mean time. Scott still continued to reside in Castle Street, during the sittings of the Court of Session, attending daily at his post in the First Division; but his heart was at Abbotsford, and not a day—not an hour—did he remain in town, when he could possibly escape from it. So eager was his affection for this creation of his purse and fancy, that on the days when the court rose for the terms of vacation, and not unfrequently on the Saturdays during its sittings, his coach was in readiness for him at the door of the parliament house, and he drove off direct to the country without calling at his town residence. Whilst residing at Abbotsford, he seemed so constantly engaged in superintending his agricultural and planting operations during the earlier part of the day, and with company in the evening, that it appeared impossible that he could find leisure for the composition of those works which were keeping the whole world in a state of continued excitation. His habits, how-

ever, were methodical. He usually commenced writing about seven o'clock in the morning, and continued at his desk, bating the interval of breakfast, till one or two in the afternoon: then shaved, dressed, and rode or walked out to visit his grounds and improvements till dinner time. The evening he dedicated solely to amusement, either in reading, listening to his daughter playing on the harp or piano-forte, or in entertaining company,—the latter of which, indeed, he was scarcely ever without. By this uniform system of economising his time, he managed to write, on an average, to the amount of a sheet, or sixteen pages of print per day. The secret was,—*he was always alike prepared*: he wrote without study or premeditation, and when he wrote fastest he wrote best, for then his mind was most redolent of the “thick-coming fancies” of his genius. One of the most remarkable, at once, and amiable characteristics of Scott, was the entire absence of any thing like the airs of authorship in his language and deportment, although, beyond doubt, the most voluminous and successful of all British writers in ancient or modern times. He left the author in his study, and came forth into the world the plain country gentleman, taking his part in the common details of life, and exchanging the usual courtesies of society. It is from their inability, or their disdaining, to pursue a similar rational course,—to enter with interest into the affairs of the world, and to regulate their manners and deportment according to the observances imposed by the conventional rules of society, that literary men are, for the most part, found rather a nuisance than an acquisition in general company.

When he rode out, Scott was usually dressed in a short green coat, wide trowsers, and stout shoes; and he bestrode a stout little Gallo-way, fitted for climbing the braes, and from which he could dismount, and get up upon again, with ease. He always carried with him a small hatchet or hand-saw—frequently both—with which he amused and exercised himself in lopping off superfluous boughs from the trees, and sometimes cut down an entire one where he saw occasion. He was always attended by two favourite stag-hounds—very fine animals—one of which, called Maida, was a present from “the last of all the chieftains,” the late Glengarry. He has consecrated to immortality the memory of this favourite, in his novel of Woodstock, under the name of Bevis; and a fine painting of it, by Landseer, is preserved at Blair-Adam, the property of lord chief commissioner Adam.\* To those

\* In a note at the end of Woodstock, Scott says, “I cannot suppress the avowal of some personal vanity when I mention, that a friend, going through Munich, picked up a common snuff-box, such as are sold for one franc, on which was displayed the form of this veteran favourite, simply marked as—“Der leiblung hund von Walter Scott.”



employed on his grounds he always spoke in the most kindly and familiar terms; never assuming the haughty port of the patron and master, but addressing them rather with the encouraging frankness of a friend, the consequence was, that he was universally beloved by his inferiors, equally by those dependent on himself, and all in the surrounding district. We have heard, however, that he was rather impatient of promiscuous intruders on his property, and latterly manifested the usual aristocratic prejudice against the poachers by land and water. But he was never known to prosecute any one, and contented himself with requesting the trespasser to quit the bounds of his domain. It is customary amongst our popular declaimers on the subject of liberty, and the rights and innocent recreations of "the people," to stigmatise this jealous disposition on the part of landed proprietors, as merely the manifestation of a tyrannical mind, and of a wanton pleasure in oppressing and lording it over those whom their own superior wealth and rank have constituted their inferiors. We have certainly no *grounds* for becoming defenders of the game-laws or the trespass-acts, but we may observe, that were one of those liberal-tongued advocates of universal toleration possessed—as indeed, it is one of the characteristics of their sect not to be so—of a property upon which it was his pleasure to expend his time, ingenuity, and funds, in enclosing, planting, and improving, we believe in our conscience he would manifest every whit as much impatience at seeing his young trees pulled up, or cut down for switches, and his fences broken through by every nameless vagrant, as those against whom, in his unpropertied condition, he delights in launching the thunders of his philanthropic indignation. Scott was proud of his self-acquired acres, and in one sense he might well be so, seeing that he had within a few years, from the unassisted stores of his own ingenuity, and the profits of his literary labours, literally converted a wild district of barren and unsheltered moorland into a rich scene of romantic beauty and repose. It is little wonder, therefore, that he watched with a sort of paternal jealousy over the welfare of this self-created Eden. Respecting the mansion of Abbotsford itself—the successor of the humble onstead of Cartley-hold—the most expressive *general* description is undoubtedly that of the Frenchman, a "Romance in Stone and Lime;" and we believe the best minute detail of the architecture and plenishing of this singular abode, is that of Scott's Trans-Atlantic biographer, J. W. Lake, Esq. who visited it in the very year at which we have now arrived, 1825. It is, indeed, almost *inventorial*, and we will make no apology for transferring to our pages that portion of it referring more particularly to the internal structure and furnishing of the building.

"Not being skilled in the technical tongue of the architects, I beg leave to decline describing the structure of the house, further than merely to say, that it is more than one hundred and fifty feet long in front, as I paced it; was built at two different onsets; has a tall tower at either end, the one not the least like the other; presents sundry *crownfooted*, alias zigzagged, gables to the eye; a myriad of indentions and parapets and machicolated eaves; most phantastic waterspouts; labelled windows, not a few of them of painted glass; groups of right Elizabethan chimneys; balconies of divers fashions, greater and lesser; stones carved with heraldries innumerable let in here and there in the wall; and a very noble projecting gateway, a *fac simile*, I am told, of that appertaining to a certain dilapidated royal palace. From this porchway, which is spacious and airy, quite open to the elements in front, and adorned with some enormous petrified stag-horns overhead, you are admitted by a pair of folding doors at once into the hall, and an imposing *coup d'œil* the first glimpse of the poet's interior does present. The lofty windows, only two in number, being wholly covered with coats of arms, the place appears as dark as the twelfth century, on your first entrance from noonday; but the delicious coolness of the atmosphere is luxury enough for a minute or two; and by degrees your eyes get accustomed to the effect of those 'storied panes,' and you are satisfied that you stand in one of the most picturesque of apartments. The hall is, I should guess, about forty feet long, by twenty in height and breadth. The walls are of richly carved oak, most part of it exceedingly dark, and brought, it seems, from the old palace of Dunfermline: the roof, a series of pointed arches of the same, each beam presenting in the centre a shield of arms richly blazoned: of these shields there are sixteen, enough to bear all the quarterings of a perfect pedigree, if the poet could show them; but on the maternal side, (at the extremity,) there are two or three blanks (of the same sort which made Louis le Grand unhappy,) which have been covered with sketches of Cloudland, and equipped with the appropriate motto, '*Nox alta velat.*' The shields, properly filled up, are distinguished ones; the descent of Scott and Harden on one side, and Rutherford *of that ilk* on the other. There is a door-way at the eastern end, over and round which the baronet has placed another series of escutcheons, which I looked on with at least as much respect; they are the memorials of his immediate personal connections, the bearings of his friends and companions. All around the cornice of this noble room, there runs a continued series of blazoned shields, of another sort still; at the centre of one end, I saw the bloody heart of Douglas; and opposite to that, the royal lion of Scotland,—and between the ribs there is an inscription in black letter, which I, after some trials, read, and of which I wish I had had sense enough to take

a copy. To the best of my recollection, the words are not unlike these: 'These be the coat armories of the clannis and chief men of name, wha keepit the marchys of Scotland in the auld tyme for the kinge. Trewe were they in their tyme, and in their defense God them defendyt.' There are from thirty to forty shields thus distinguished—Douglas, Soullis, Buccleuch, Maxwell, Johnstoune, Glendoning, Herries, Rutherford, Kerr, Elliot, Pringle, Home, and all the other heroes, as you may guess, of the border minstrelsy. The floor of this hall is black and white marble, from the Hebrides, wrought lozengewise; and the upper walls are completely hung with arms and armour. Two full suits of splendid steel occupy niches at the eastern end by themselves; the one an English suit of Henry the Fifth's time, the other an Italian, not quite so old. The variety of cuirasses, black and white, plain and sculptured, is endless; helmets are in equal profusion; stirrups and spurs, of every fantasy, dangle about and below them; and there are swords of every order, from the enormous two-handed weapon with which the Swiss peasants dared to withstand the spears of the Austrian chivalry, to the claymore of the 'forty-five,' and the rapier of Dettingen. Indeed, I might come still lower, for, among other spoils, I saw Polish lances, gathered by the author of Paul's Letters on the field of Waterloo, and a complete suit of chain-mail taken off the corpse of Tippoo's body-guard at Seringapatam. A series of German executioners' swords was *inter alia* pointed out to me; on the blade of one of which I made out the arms of Augsburg, and a legend which may be thus rendered:

Dust, when I strike to dust: from sleepless grave,  
Sweet Jesu, stoop, a sin-stained soul to save.

I am sorry there is no catalogue of this curious collection. Sir Walter ought to make one himself, for my cicerone informs me there is some particular history attached to almost every piece in it, and known in detail to nobody but himself. 'Stepping westward,' as Wordsworth says, 'from this hall, you find yourself in a narrow, low arched room, which runs quite across the house, having a blazoned window again at either extremity, and filled all over with smaller pieces of armour and weapons, such as swords, firelocks, spears, arrows, darts, daggers, &c. Here are the pieces, esteemed most precious by reason of their histories respectively. I saw, among the rest, Rob Roy's gun, with his initials, R. M. C. i. e. Robert Macgregor Campbell, round the touch-hole: the blunderbuss of Hofer, a present to Sir Walter from his friend Sir Humphrey Davy; a most magnificent sword, as magnificently mounted, the gift of Charles the First to the great Montrose, and having the arms of prince Henry worked on the hilt; the hunting bottle of bonnie king Jamie; Bonaparte's pistols, (found in his carriage at Waterloo, I be-

lieve,) *cum multis aliis*. I should have mentioned that stag-horns and bull's-horns, (the petrified relics of the old mountain monster, I mean,) and so forth, are suspended in great abundance above all the door-ways of these armories; and that, in one corner, a dark one as it ought to be, there is a complete assortment of the old Scottish instruments of torture, not forgetting the very thumbiekins under which cardinal Carstairs did *not* flinch, and the more terrific iron crown of Wishart the martyr, being a sort of barred head-piece, screwed on the victim at the stake, to prevent him from crying aloud in his agony. In short, there can be no doubt that, like Grose of merry memory, the mighty minstrel

——— Has a fouth o' auld nick-nackets,  
Rusty airn caps and jingling jackets;  
Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets,  
A towmont' guid.

These relics of other, and for the most part darker years, are disposed, however, with so much grace and elegance, that I doubt if Mr. Hope himself would find any thing to quarrel with in the beautiful apartments which contain them. The smaller of these opens to the drawing-room on one side and the dining-room on the other, and is fitted up with low *divans* rather than sofas; so as to make, I doubt not, a most agreeable sitting-room when the apartments are occupied, as for my sins I found them not. In the hall, when the weather is hot, the baronet is accustomed to dine; and a gallant refectory no question it must make. A ponderous chandelier of painted glass swings from the roof; and the chimney-piece, (the design copied from the stone-work of the Abbot's Stall at Melrose,) would hold rafters enough for a Christmas fire of the good old times. Were the company suitably attired, a dinner-party here would look like a scene in the Mysteries of Udolpho.

"Beyond this smaller, or rather, I should say, the narrower armory, lies the dining-parlour proper, however; and though there is nothing Udolphoish here, yet I can well believe that, when lighted up and the curtains drawn at night, the place may give no bad notion of the private snuggerly of some lofty lord abbot of the time of the Canterbury Tales. The room is a very handsome one, with a low and very richly carved roof of dark oak again; a huge projecting bow window, and the dais elevated *more majorem*: the ornaments of the roof, niches for lamps, &c., in short, all the minor details, are, I believe, *fac similes* after Melrose. The walls are hung in crimson, but almost entirely covered with pictures, of which the most remarkable are—the parliamentary general, Lord Essex, a full length on horseback; the duke of Monmouth, by Lely; a capital Hogarth by himself; Prior and Gay, both by Jervas; and the head of Mary Queen of Scots, in a charger, painted

by Amias Canrood the day after the decapitation at Fotheringay, and sent some years ago as a present to Sir Walter from a Prussian nobleman, in whose family it had been for more than two centuries. It is a most death-like performance, and the countenance answers well enough to the coins of the unfortunate beauty, though not at all to any of the portraits I have happened to see. I believe there is no doubt as to the authenticity of this most curious picture. Among various family pictures, I noticed particularly Sir Walter's great grandfather, the old cavalier mentioned in one of the epistles in *Marmion*, who let his beard grow after the execution of Charles the First, and who here appears accordingly, with a most venerable appendage of silver whiteness, reaching even unto his girdle. This old gentleman's son hangs close by him; and had it not been for the costume, &c., I should have taken it for a likeness of Sir Walter himself. It is very like the common portraits of the poet, though certainly not like either Sir Thomas Lawrence's picture or Chantrey's bust. There is also a very splendid full-length of Lucy Waters, mother to the duke of Monmouth: and an oval, capitably painted, of Anne, duchess of Buccleuch, the same who,

In pride of youth, in beauty's bloom,  
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb.

All the furniture of this room is massy Gothic oak; and, as I said before, when it is fairly lit up, and plate and glass set forth, it must needs have a richly and luxuriously antique aspect. Beyond and alongside are narrowish passages, which make one fancy one's self in the penetralia of some dim old monastery; for roofs, and walls, and windows (square, round, and oval like) are sculptured in stone, after the richest relics of Melrose and Roslin Chapel. One of these leads to a charming breakfast room, which looks to the Tweed on one side, and towards Yarrow and Ettrick, famed in song, on the other: a cheerful room, fitted up with novels, romances, and poetry, I could perceive, at one end; and the other walls covered thick and thicker with a most valuable and beautiful collection of water-colour drawings, chiefly by Turner, and Thomson of Duddington, the designings, in short, for the magnificent work entitled '*Provincial Antiquities of Scotland*.' There is one very grand oil painting over the chimneypiece, *Fastcastle*, by Thomson, alias the Wolf's Crag of the *Bride of Lammermoor*, one of the most majestic and melancholy sea-pieces I ever saw;\* and some large black and white drawings of the *Vision of Don Roderick*, by Sir James Steuart of Allenton, (whose illustrations of *Marmion* and *Mazeppa* you have

\* In a note to the late edition of his novels, Scott mentions that the original of Wolf's Crag is the Kaim of Uric on the east coast of Scotland.

seen or heard of,) are at one end of the parlour. The room is crammed with queer cabinets and boxes, and in a niche there is a bust of old Henry Mackenzie, by Joseph of Edinburgh. Returning towards the armory, you have, on one side of a most religious-looking corridor, a small greenhouse with a fountain playing before it—the very fountain that in days of yore graced the cross of Edinburgh, and used to flow with claret at the coronation of the Stuarts—a pretty design, and a standing monument of the barbarity of modern innovation. From the small armory you pass, as I said before, into the drawing-room, a large, lofty, and splendid *salon*, with antique ebony furniture and crimson silk hangings, cabinets, china, and mirrors, *quantum suff.*, and some portraits; among the rest, glorious John Dryden, by Sir Peter Lely, with his gray hairs floating about in a most picturesque style, eyes full of wildness, presenting the old bard, I take it, in one of those ‘tremulous moods,’ in which we have it on record he appeared when interrupted in the midst of his *Alexander’s Feast*. From this you pass into the largest of all the apartments, the library, which, I must say, is really a noble room. It is an oblong of some fifty feet by thirty, with a projection in the centre, opposite the fire-place, terminating in a grand bow-window, fitted up with books also, and, in fact, constituting a sort of chapel to the church. The roof is of carved oak again—a very rich pattern—I believe chiefly *a la* Roslin, and the bookcases, which are also of richly carved oak, reach high up the walls all round. The collection amounts, in this room, to some fifteen or twenty thousand volumes, arranged according to their subjects: British history and antiquities filling the whole of the chief wall; English poetry and drama, classics and miscellanies, one end; foreign literature, chiefly French and German, the other. The cases on the side opposite the fire are wired and locked, as containing articles very precious and very portable. One consisting entirely of books and MSS. relating to the insurrections of 1715 and 1745; and another (within the recess of the bow-window) of treatises *de re magica*, both of these being, (I am told, and can well believe,) in their several ways, collections of the rarest curiosity. My cicerone pointed out, in one corner, a magnificent set of Mountfaucon, ten volumes folio, bound in the richest manner in scarlet, and stamped with the royal arms, the gift of his present majesty. There are few living authors of whose works presentation copies are not to be found here. My friend showed me inscriptions of that sort in, I believe, every European dialect extant. The books are all in prime condition, and bindings that would satisfy Mr. Dibdin. The only picture is Sir Walter’s eldest son, in hussar uniform, and holding his horse, by Allan of Edinburgh, a noble portrait, over the fireplace; and the only bust is that of Shakspeare, from the Avon monument, in a small niche in the centre of the east side. On a

rich stand of porphyry, in one corner, reposes a tall silver urn filled with bones from the Piræus, and bearing the inscription, 'Given by George Gordon, Lord Byron, to Sir Walter Scott, Bart.' It contained the letter which accompanied the gift till lately: it has disappeared; no one guesses who took it, but whoever he was, as my guide observed, he must have been a thief for thieving's sake truly, as he durst no more exhibit his autograph than tip himself a bare bodkin. Sad, infamous tourist indeed! Although I saw abundance of comfortable looking desks and arm-chairs, yet this room seemed rather too large and fine for *work*, and I found accordingly, after passing a double pair of doors, that there was a *sanctum* within and beyond this library. And here you may believe was not to me the least interesting, though by no means the most splendid part of the suite.

"The lion's own den, proper, then, is a room of about five and twenty feet square by twenty feet high, containing, of what is properly called furniture, nothing but a small writing-table in the centre, a plain arm-chair covered with black-leather—a very comfortable one though, for I tried it—and a single chair besides, plain symptoms that this is no place for company. On either side of the fire-place there are shelves filled with duodecimos and books of reference, chiefly, of course, folios; but except these there are no books save the contents of a light gallery which runs round three sides of the room, and is reached by a hanging stair of carved oak in one corner. There are only two portraits, an original of the beautiful and melancholy head of Claverhouse, and a small full length of Rob Roy. Various little antique cabinets stand round about, each having a bust on it: Stothard's Canterbury Pilgrims are on the mantel-piece; and in one corner I saw a collection of really useful weapons, those of the forest-craft, to wit,—axes and bills, and so forth, of every calibre. There is only one window pierced in a very thick wall, so that the place is rather sombre: the light tracery-work of the gallery overhead harmonizes with the books well. It is a very comfortable looking room, and very unlike any other I ever was in. I should not forget some Highland claymores, clustered round a target over the Canterbury people, nor a writing-box of carved wood, lined with crimson velvet, and furnished with silver plate of right venerable aspect, which looked as if it might have been the implement of old Chaucer himself, but which, from the arms on the lid, must have belonged to some Italian prince of the days of Leo the Magnificent at the furthest.

"The view of the Tweed from all the principal apartments is beautiful. You look out from among bowers, over a lawn of sweet turf, upon the clearest of all streams, fringed with the wildest of birch-woods, and backed with the green hills of Ettrick Forest. The rest you must imagine. Altogether, the place destined to receive so many pilgrimages, contains

within itself beauties not unworthy of its associations. Few poets ever inhabited such a place; and none, ere now, ever created one."

From this lively and poetical description, our readers will be able to form some idea of the internal appearance of Abbotsford, but it would occupy volumes to enumerate all the curiosities which were there congregated from every quarter of the known world. A menagerie might almost have been formed out of the zoological presents he received from distant lands. "A friend told me," says Allan Cunningham, "he was at Abbotsford one evening when a servant announced a present from—I forget what chieftain in the North. 'Bring it in,' said the poet. The sound of strange feet were soon heard, and in came two beautiful Shetland ponies, with long manes and uncut tails, and so small, that they might have been sent to Elfland to the Queen of the Fairies herself. One poor Scotsman, to show his gratitude for some kindness, Scott, as sheriff, had shown him, sent two kangaroos from New Holland; and Washington Irving lately told me, that some Spaniard or other, having caught two young wild Andalusian boars, consulted him how he might have them sent to the author of the 'Vision of Don Roderick.' " But our limits forbid us dwelling longer on this theme.

Such were the domains and such the habitation of our illustrious author, in the creation of which he has been heard to declare that he felt greater pride than in being the author of all the wonderful productions of his pen. Such a sentiment from almost any other person we would have been apt to think apocryphal, and not a few of our literati have scouted it as preposterous; but from our examination of the peculiar structure of Scott's mind, we are fully convinced of its truth. It was about this happy period, while one day straying through his lawns and plantations with his factor and friend, Mr. Laidlaw, that, after stopping on an eminence, and surveying for some time in silence, but with an evidently full heart, the self created Eden which lay stretched around him, he muttered in a tone of mingled thankfulness and exultation, "Lo, I passed the river Tweed with my staff and my scrip, and now I am become a great nation!" Alas! to think that with the rearing of this goodly kingdom must be associated the sorrowful recollection of all the distresses which overclouded the latter years of his life, and which brought him, perhaps, to an untimely grave! Abbotsford and its grounds have been visited by thousands of all ranks, and from all corners of the earth, and have by them been regarded only with sensations of wonder, curiosity, and pleasure; but we, whose duty it has been to keep our minds, as far as it is possible to do so unbiassed by the atmosphere of romance which must ever envelope the scene of the great magician's labours, must look upon them with less of pleasure than of sorrow and humiliation!



On his return from his Irish tour in the autumn of 1825, Scott was engaged by Mr. Constable to undertake a subject of a somewhat different nature than any he had before grappled with. That enterprising publisher had just then projected his well known *Miscellany*, which, from the judiciousness of its plan, and the liberal spirit with which it was entered upon, soon attained a reputation and success as singular as it was merited, and laid the foundation of an entirely new system in the annals of publication.\* The work for which he now enlisted the pen of Scott, was the *Life of Bonaparte*,—a topic, perhaps, too extensive to form the subject of an unelaborate and popular memoir, such as it was his object to procure. At least Scott so found it, having, after proceeding to the length, as we have heard, of three or four volumes, felt the necessity of extending and remodeling his whole plan, and canceling all his previous labour. It was upon this work he was engaged, when, in February 1826, amidst the distresses which then visited almost every branch of trade and industry, literary as well as commercial, in Great Britain, the long established publishing house of Constable and Company became bankrupt; and along with it the printing concern of Ballantyne and Company. In the introduction to the recent edition of the “*Chronicles of the Canongate*,” Scott himself thus speaks of this, to himself as to others, overwhelming casualty.

“The year 1825, so disastrous to many branches of industry and commerce, did not spare the market of literature; and the sudden ruin that fell on so many booksellers, could scarcely have been expected to leave unscathed one, whose career had of necessity connected him deeply and extensively with the pecuniary transactions of that profession. In a word, almost without one note of premonition, I found myself involved in the sweeping catastrophe of the unhappy time, and called on to meet the demands of creditors upon commercial establishments with which my fortunes had long been bound up to the extent of no less a sum than one hundred and twenty thousand pounds.” This sum, however, he it observed, includes the claims against him by the creditors of Ballantyne and Company.

Even were we inclined—which we certainly are not—to enter into a minute exposition of the pecuniary affairs of these two companies, the complicated and involved nature of their mutual transactions would render any statement, short of a complete *professional* report of the whole circumstances, only confused and unsatisfactory, and at the same time liable to misconstruction. We shall therefore keep as clear as

\* The ‘*Miscellany*’ was entirely a private speculation of Mr. Constable’s, distinct from the affairs of the firm.

possible of all matters with which the subject of our memoir was not immediately connected.

Upon making up a statement of the affairs of Constable and Company,\* it was found that Sir Walter Scott was liable as an individual, and as a partner of Ballantyne and Company, for 72,000*l.*; at least the trustee for the bankrupt estate ranked upon him to that amount.

The total amount of the debts of Ballantyne and Company was about 110,000*l.*, *for the whole of which* Sir Walter Scott was liable, as a partner of the concern.

At first view, therefore, Scott's pecuniary liabilities to the creditors of these two firms alone, and exclusive altogether of his own private debts, would appear to exceed 180,000*l.* sterling. But it must be observed, that about a half, perhaps of the 72,000*l.* due to the estate of Constable and Company was included in the debts of Ballantyne and Company, being bills granted to the former company by the latter, during their mutual transactions; and having the names of Scott or Ballantyne, or both, upon them, as representing the firm of Ballantyne and Company. Deducting, therefore, that moiety—say 35,000*l.*—from the gross amount, Scott's actual liabilities would be somewhere about 147,000*l.*

To reconcile this account with that of Sir Walter himself, who sets down his total responsibilities at 120,000*l.*, we must suppose the assets, or available funds of Ballantyne and Company to meet their debts, to amount to the difference—or 27,000*l.*

Scott says, that these disasters came upon him “almost without a note of premonition;” but it seems incomprehensible to us, how any man of common circumspection, possessing, moreover, some knowledge of commercial matters, could be at all surprised at such a termination to the transactions in which he had been involved with Mr. Constable for many years. Of the 72,000*l.* brought against him as debtor, to the estate of the latter, the moiety for which he was *individually* responsible,—that is to say, from 37,000*l.* to 40,000*l.*, (for it is impossible for us to be minutely accurate,)—consisted of personal accommodation bills to Mr. Constable, being solely for the benefit and convenience of that gentleman. That an individual in business should stand in need of such an enormous amount of *floating credit*, ought, it might be supposed, to have been of itself a fact sufficiently premonitory of the result likely to ensue. Neither was it, as if such accommodation had been rendered expedient by a sudden and temporary stagnation of trade, although to that circumstance, doubtless, must be attributed the immediate bursting of the sore. But the *pus* had been accumulating for years, and Scott

\* The debts of Constable and Company amounted, we believe, to upwards of 253,500*l.* sterling!

*could not* but have been perfectly aware of it. The greater part of the bills current at the time of the bankruptcy were no recent matters. All, or most people in business, are aware of the convenient process by which these representatives of capital can be made, at the end of three, six, nine, or more months, to change their primary character, and re-appear, like the silk-worm, after throwing off its old skin, in a fresh dress and more formidable size. Many of Mr. Constable's bills had been periodically casting their slough in this manner for years. To retire one, another of a larger amount had to be substituted, although, of course, prudence frequently dictated the metamorphosis taking place at a different locality. Thus, a bill for 1000*l.*, when the term of its existence in the Commercial Bank, where it first acquired vitality, expired, would be resuscitated as one of 1500*l.* in the British Linen Company,—and, again, as one of 2000*l.* in the Bank of Scotland—and so forth. This system is unfortunately but too common amongst our commercial classes. It is like rolling a snowball up a hill covered with its own element. At every turn it acquires greater size and weight, and consequently needs increased strength to propel it: there can be no stopping; and when it becomes too ponderous to be moved farther, it almost invariably proves an avalanche, irresistibly bearing backwards on its originators, and burying them in its ruins. Nor was the practice, in the present case, confined to the round of the Banks in Edinburgh. Their more distant provincial branches, as being removed from the prime centre of observation, were likewise favoured with opportunities of exercising the same *accommodating* disposition. One instance we can speak of with certainty, and feel it almost necessary to quote, as explanatory of the aerial system by which Constable supported his commercial credit, and *remunerated Scott* for many years previous to his failure, although the transaction is one which we would otherwise have felt most desirous of concealing. A bill, for a sum not many hundreds short of 1000*l.*, with Constable's name adhibited, was, so far back as the year 1819, presented at a branch bank in the south of Scotland, and was, of course, immediately cashed. When the period of its retirement arrived, the agent, from the (supposed) responsible character of the party concerned, and, no doubt, considering the premium for discount to himself, had not the slightest hesitation in accepting a similar document in payment. In short, this individual bill was renewed, term after term, and year after year, until the fatal February, 1826, when, by Mr. Constable's failure, the unfortunate agent was obliged to make good the amount of the bill to his employers, and content himself with its dividend as a creditor on the bankrupt case.

Scott, we repeat, *must* have been aware of the progress and ultimate tendency of this hollow system; and we have even stronger evidence of

the wilfulness with which he shut his eyes to the inevitable consequences. Some months before the fatal bankruptcy took place, one of Mr. Constable's bills, for a very large amount, was presented at one of the Edinburgh banks, having Scott's name attached to it. A friendly director, who, from the recent frequency of such transactions, was at no loss to see how matters stood with the publisher, sent for Sir Walter, and asked him, if he was aware of the great number of heavy bills which Mr. Constable had abroad. "Sir Walter," continued he, in an earnest tone, "I advise you to be cautious." Scott was considerably struck by this friendly warning, for which he expressed his thanks. He acknowledged he was aware of Mr. Constable being straitened for money, owing to the stagnant state of the commercial world:—"But," he continued, after a pause of reflection, and in a tone of much feeling, "Archibald Constable was a good friend to me when friends were somewhat scarcer than at present, and (here he spoke in a firm and decided tone) he shall not want a few thousands more yet, if he thinks they can be of service to him."

The fact was, that Scott could not possibly help himself. He was constrained to do what he did equally by feelings of gratitude and self-interest. He could not, in point of honour, refuse the credit of his name to one who had so often pledged his own for his convenience, and who had been, in fact, a sort of banker to him on all pecuniary emergencies. For instance, we know, that when Sir Walter's eldest son obtained his commission in the army, Constable advanced the funds necessary to defray all the expenses of his out-fit,—if not, indeed, the purchase money of the commission itself. Friendly and timely aids of this nature, have, in the eyes of a man of proper feeling, a far more sacred claim to a grateful return, than mere commercial accommodations. But besides this, it was only by lending his name in the manner mentioned, in order to obtain for Constable the command of cash, that he himself was enabled to obtain from the latter the large advance on his works whilst they were in progress,—nay, as will be presently seen, sometimes before they were even begun! Other publishing houses would no doubt have been most ready to accept of Scott's works on as liberal terms as those given by Mr. Constable; but it is questionable how far they would have been willing, like him, to purchase—to use a vulgar phrase—"a pig in a pock." The following documents, made public some time ago, will, we doubt not, be perused with great interest by all our readers. It shows, at once, the masked manner in which Scott's bargains with his publishers were managed, and the prompt terms of payment required and unhesitatingly agreed to.

"Dear sirs,—I am desired by the Author of *Waverley* to propose to

you a new bargain for another romance on the same terms as the last. The money will be wanted previously to the 28th of this month.

"Should you accept the proposal, I shall make you a formal offer in the usual mode; and as the author is desirous to have the matter closed as speedily as possible, I hope to have the pleasure of hearing from you in the course of a day or two. I am, dear sirs, yours truly,

(Signed)

"JAMES BALLANTYNE."

Messrs. A. Constable and Co. having intimated their intention of accepting the offer, they next day received the following note and offer.

|                      |      |   |   |      |
|----------------------|------|---|---|------|
| "18th or 19th March, | 18th | . | . | £500 |
| 25th and 26th        | 20th | . | . | 750  |
|                      | 24th | . | . | 850  |
|                      | 28th | . | . | 400  |

---

£2500

"P. O. 7th March, 1823.

"Dear sirs,—The prefixed are the dates at which I should be glad to receive the advance on the new, and I will thank you to be kind enough to let me know if the arrangement will suit you. Yours truly,

(Signed)

"JAMES BALLANTYNE."

The agreement for this work was completed by the following *missives*.

"P. ●. Edinburgh, 7th March, 1823.

"Messrs. Archibald Constable and Co.—Gentlemen,—I am empowered by the Author of *Waverley*, *Peveril of the Peak*, &c., as his agent, to offer you his next work of fiction following that contracted for with me on 14th October last; if a romance, in 3 vols.; if a novel, in 4.—I shall, however, as heretofore, recapitulate the agreements that are now open betwixt us and the said author.

I.—"The work, which is not yet named, now far advanced at press, immediately following *Peveril of the Peak*, and contracted for on the 3d of September, 1821. (*Quentin Durward*.)

II.—"The next work of fiction (written by the author) following that agreed for on 3d September, 1821, and contracted for 26th of February, 1822. (*St. Ronan's Well*.)

III.—"The next work of fiction (written by the author) following that agreed for on 26th February, 1822; and contracted for on 7th May, 1822. (*Redgauntlet*.)

IV.—"The next work of fiction (written by the author) following that agreed for on 7th May, 1822, and contracted for, as before mentioned, on the 14th October last. (*Tales of the Crusaders*.)

"The conditions of the work now to be contracted for, are as follow:—

"1st—That the impression shall be ten thousand copies.

"2d—That the author is to receive three thousand seven hundred and fifty pounds, for his share of the profits of the said ten thousand copies.

"3d—That I am to have one-third of the transaction, you managing the whole, as formerly.

"4th—That for your two-thirds, you are to grant bills at four, five, and six months, for twenty-five hundred pounds.

"5th—That James Ballantyne and Co. are to print the work; and that on publication, you are to draw on them for one-third share of the paper and print of the work, at a date not exceeding twelve months.

"6th—That you are at liberty to print, if you shall see cause, two thousand copies, in addition to the ten thousand copies above stipulated for; but, in putting the additional number to press, the author is to receive seven hundred and fifty pounds, payable in the proportions by you and myself, as already narrated, and with a like division of the books. I am, gentlemen, your very faithful servant,

(Signed)

"JAMES BALLANTYNE."

"Edinburgh, 8th March, 1823.

"Dear Sir,—Above you have a copy of your proposal of a new work, by the Author of Waverley, which we hereby accept of; and we remain, dear sir, yours truly,

(Signed)

"A. CONSTABLE & Co.

"Addressed to Mr. James Ballantyne."

The following is the contract concluded by Mr. Ballantyne on behalf of the concealed author, with the house of Constable & Co:—

"20th October, 1823.

"Messrs. Archibald Constable & Co.—Gentlemen, I am empowered by the Author of Waverley, Quentin Durward, &c., as his agent, to offer you his next work of fiction, following that contracted for with me on 7th March last; if a romance, in 3 vols.; if a novel, in 4.

"I shall, however, as heretofore, recapitulate the agreements that are now open betwixt us and the said author.

I.—"The work, now far advanced at press, and named St. Ronan's Well, and contracted for on 26th February, 1822.

II.—"The next work of fiction written by the author, following St. Ronan's Well, and contracted for on 7th May, 1822. (Redgauntlet.)

III.—The next work of fiction written by the author, following that contracted for 7th May, 1822, and contracted for on 14th October, 1822. (Tales of the Crusaders.)

IV.—“The next work of fiction written by the author, following that contracted for on 14th October, 1822, and agreed for as before stated on 7th March last.

“The conditions of the work now to be contracted for are as follow :

“1<sup>st</sup>—That the impression shall be ten thousand copies.

“2<sup>d</sup>—That the author is to receive three thousand seven hundred and fifty pounds, for his share of the profits of the said ten thousand copies.

“3<sup>d</sup>—That I am to have one-third of the transaction, you managing the whole as formerly.

“4<sup>th</sup>—That for your two-thirds you are to grant bills at four, five and six months, for twenty-five hundred pounds.

“5<sup>th</sup>—That James Ballantyne & Co. are to print the work, and that, on publication, you are to draw on them for one-third share of paper and print of the work, at twelve months date.

“6<sup>th</sup>—That you are at liberty to print, if you shall see cause, two thousand copies in addition to the ten thousand copies above stipulated for; but, in putting the additional number to press, the author is to receive seven hundred and fifty pounds, payable in the proportions by you and myself, as already narrated, and with a like division of the books. I am, gentlemen, your faithful and obedient servant,

(Signed)

“JAMES BALLANTYNE.”

“Edinburgh, 29th October, 1832.

“Dear Sir,—On the other side we hand you a copy of your proposal, dated 28th instant, for a new work by the Author of Waverley: we hereby accept of said proposal, and are, dear sir, yours truly,

(Signed)

“A. CONSTABLE & Co.”

From the preceding, it will not only be evident that Constable was entirely ignorant both of the name and nature of the works thus contracted for, but that *Scott himself* was sometimes equally ignorant; that he had not even in his own mind determined on his subjects, for had he done so, he could certainly have said at once whether the work was to be a novel or a romance. The latter extraordinary fact is confirmed by the long periods which intervened between the contracting for and publishing of the various works. Thus it appears that “*Quentin Durward*,” which was published in the latter end of the year 1823, was contracted for in September, 1821; “*St. Ronan’s Well*” and “*Redgauntlet*,” published in 1824, were contracted for in the spring of 1822; “*The Crusaders*,” published in 1825, contracted for also in 1822, and the one which was the subject of the above contract, (which afterwards appeared in the shape of “*Woodstock*,” to be afterwards more parti-

cularly noticed,) dated March, 1823, did not appear until 1826; and it seems clear had not been begun—perhaps not even thought of—at the time. Respecting the contract, dated October, 1823, there is *positive certainty* that Scott was impawning his fancy at blind hazard. The only work which can be made to answer to that agreement, is the first two volumes of the “Chronicles of the Canongate,” published in 1827, the design of which series of fictions, as Scott himself tells us, was conceived *after* the unexpected disasters of 1826.

This is the most extraordinary *literary* revelation, certainly, ever laid before the world; and truth compels us to remark, that the proceedings say little for the prudence of either party. It was not simply a speculation in hard cash upon the fickle article of popularity. *It was speculating upon life itself*, and setting at nought the chances of ill health, mental as well as corporeal, and all the other incidental casualties which are constantly occurring to mar or change all the plans and purposes of mankind. For how does the matter in reality stand?—Here was an unwritten work contracted for between Constable and Scott; the latter receives payment for it from the other in bills—and for these bills receives hard cash upon the *credit* of himself and publisher. Supposing, therefore, the author of the contemplated work to have died in the interim, and the transaction to have been uncompleted—upon whom would the loss fall? Why upon those who had given the *cash* for the *credit*, neither of the parties who had benefited by the transaction being in a condition to refund the advances to them. Nothing can possibly exonerate the memory of our author from the charge of *extreme imprudence*, at least, in this matter;—upon the conduct of the publisher, as being a practical man of business, we fear posterity will put a harsher construction.

Both parties, in fact, seem to have acted under a species of intoxication, and it is difficult to say, which of them, in their individual character, proceeded the most recklessly,—Constable in commercial matters, or Scott in his insane passion for the acquisition of territorial property. *Relatively*, however, and viewing their connection, not as friends, but in the cold commercial light of author and publisher, the balance stands heavy against the latter.

It is true, that with Scott himself originated that system of mutual pecuniary accommodation, from which he afterwards found it impossible to extricate himself—and it is no less true, Constable had, on many occasions, actively and efficiently befriended him with advances of money; but looking dispassionately at all the circumstances, it will be seen that all the risk lay on one side—that of Scott. Whilst the latter was pledging his all upon the perilous chances of commercial adventure, by which he might be ruined, but from which he could derive not one pen-



ny of advantage, Constable was, in reality, risking nothing at all in return,—having, in case of the worst, still the property of Abbotsford to look to for repayment of his cash advances, while he was, at the same time, drawing large sums of positive and immediate gain by the sale of the novels. In the hey-day of their prosperity, Scott does not seem to have viewed the matter in this light, but we have reason to know that he latterly did so. He said little, however; and almost the only instance we know of his throwing out any thing like a reflection against the man who had plunged him into almost irremediable ruin, was, in his remarking to Captain Basil Hall, on the eve of his departure for the continent in the autumn of 1831, “Ah! if I had been in our excellent friend Cadell’s hands during all the course of my writing for the public, I should now undoubtedly have been worth a couple of hundred thousand pounds, instead of having to work myself to pieces to get out of debt.”\*

Yet, let us do justice to all parties. From all our investigations into this painful subject, we are convinced that Constable did not designedly or deliberately lead his friend into ruin; nor even, until almost the termination of his career, suspect the desperate state of his own affairs. The rock upon which the fortunes of that gentleman was wrecked, was the exaggerated and extravagant ideas he entertained of the value of his stock in trade, which, in respect of magnitude at least, was certainly enormous. Huge impressions of every work bearing his imprimatur, were uniformly thrown off, without due regard to the probabilities of sale; and as these stores of paper and printers’ ink accumulated around him, he seems to have fondly flattered himself with the idea of their being so much sure and available capital,—while the greater proportion, perhaps, ought to have been set down as a dead loss. It is said, he persisted to the very last in estimating every volume at the *original cost price*; and as no one at all doubted his veracity, many of his most intimate friends were thus deceived respecting the real state of his affairs, and imagined his resources quite adequate to satisfy all claims against him. Of Constable’s own sincerity of belief in the extent of his resources, we have one undeniable proof to record. When the late Mr. Hunter of Blackness, who had been for many years a silent partner of the firm of Constable and Company, retired from the concern, the usual process of *taking stock* was, of course, gone through, with the view of adjusting the separate interests of the partners. This being done upon Mr. Constable’s principle above alluded to, no less a sum, we understand,

\* One strong fact illustrative of the sense of injustice which Scott conceived himself to have sustained from Constable, was, that upon the death of the latter, in 1827, he neither attended the funeral, nor returned the slightest acknowledgment to the cards of intimation and invitation sent to him.

than £17,000 sterling was adjudged to Mr. Hunter as his *individual share*,—which sum he accordingly received. Had the estimate been taken on the sober and unromantic commercial principle—that an article is worth, not what it costs, but what it will bring—there is reason to believe, that the fears which embittered the latter period of the retiring partner's life, and which terminated in so melancholy a manner, would have been found not altogether without foundation.\*

Although, however, the explanation we have now offered may somewhat palliate Mr. Constable's conduct in a moral sense, it tends little to his exculpation as a man of business; while the knowledge of the personal extravagance in which he had long indulged—living, it is said, at the rate of somewhere about £4000 a year, the consequences of which fell heavy on many a poor industrious tradesman and shopkeeper—excited a strong feeling of indignation throughout the country. Nor were the sentiments of the public towards Scott at first of a much more favourable nature. One of the main causes of irritation against him, was the disclosure of the fact, that his estate of Abbotsford, upon which he had expended such an enormous amount of money, and which was the only tangible property which he could have to present against his debts, had been settled, by a deed of entail, upon his son, Major Scott, at the time of his marriage with Miss Jobson of Lochore, in Fifeshire; and although it was immediately seen that the deed was not valid, owing to the entailor not being solvent at the date of its execution, still it was, not seemingly without reason, suspected that it had been done with an eye to the possibility of Constable's affairs becoming deranged, and so securing the liferent of the property to the entailor by a collusive and pretended disposition to his son. But the more thoroughly all the circumstances were investigated, the more clearly did Scott's character stand exculpated from so dishonourable and fraudulent a charge; and indeed had we no other fact in disproof of such an accusation, his subsequent conduct—the self-devotion with which he took the burden of the debts on his own shoulders, and the almost superhuman exertions he made to liquidate them, would be a sufficient repudiation of the calumny.

There is no doubt that Scott would easily have got his creditors to accept a composition of some comparatively trifling amount, and to grant him a full discharge, upon immediate payment of it; and we be-

\* It is said that this gentleman, who was of a very nervous and timorous temperament, suffered so much from agitation of mind owing to the embarrassments of the firm, that his reason was finally unsettled. He became indelibly impressed with the conviction, that he was to die a beggar; and notwithstanding his fortunate extrication from the cause of his alarms, and the possession to an excellent patrimonial estate, he actually destroyed himself under the impression we have mentioned.

lieve overtures to this effect were generously pressed upon him by some of those to whom he was most largely indebted. Nay, unless our information be at fault, one of these very individuals—an old gentleman, now deceased—privately sent him a blank check on the bank, properly signed, desiring him to fill in the amount of composition which the body of his creditors would agree to accept, draw the money, and so clear himself at once of all his troubles! The generosity of such an offer (if really made) has perhaps no parallel unless in the high and honourable conduct of him to whom the temptation was held out. He would listen to no terms of compromise—accept of no assistance. It behoved him, he said, to abide the consequences of his rashness, and all that he solicited for was *time*. “Gentlemen,” said he, to the claimants, using a favourite Spanish proverb, which he was fond of quoting, “‘Time and I against any two.’ Let me take this good ally into company, and I believe I shall be able to pay you every farthing.” His offer was accepted: the forbearance manifested towards him by the creditors proved no less kind than judicious, and elicited the grateful acknowledgments of Scott himself while speaking of this distressing period of his life, in the introduction to the last edition of *Chronicles of the Canongate*. “With whatever feelings,” says he, “I surrendered on the instant every shred of property which I had been accustomed to call my own.\* It became vested in the hands of gentlemen, whose integrity, prudence and intelligence, were combined with all possible liberality and kindness of disposition, and who readily afforded every assistance towards the execution of plans, in the success of which the author contemplated the possibility of his ultimate extrication, and which were of such a nature, that had assistance of this sort been withheld, he could have but little prospect of carrying them into effect.” To speak more plainly, a trust-deed was executed, in favour of certain gentlemen, whose duties were to receive the funds realised by our author’s labours, and gradually “pay off the debts, with interest, by instalments.” He likewise insured his life, with the sanction of his trustees, for the sum of 22,000*l.*, by which a *post obit* interest to that amount was secured to his creditors. With a manly readiness and cheerfulness, also, he instantly proceeded to sacrifice all his usual comforts and tastes to a sense of duty; and in order

\* Including, of course, all his rare collections of curiosities, books, plate, &c. at Abbotsford. Sir Walter, we believe, at once volunteered passing from the entail and surrendering the estate for sale for the benefit of the creditors; but as it would not probably have brought one-third of the money expended on it, besides being burdened with a bond for 10,000*l.*, contracted, as it turned out, for Constable’s support, interest as well as delicacy dictated a compliance with Sir Walter’s well-known wish to substitute labour for land in liquidating their claims.

to abridge as far as possible his personal expenditure, he sold off his house and furniture in Castle Street—a sacrifice which his creditors never dreamt of requiring at his hands—and retreated to a small flat in St. David Street, once occupied, as Mr. Chambers tells us, by the celebrated David Hume. He likewise gave up entirely seeing company, and in fact denied himself all the indulgences to which he had been so long habituated. How he internally bore up against all this reverse of circumstances it is painful to conjecture, but certainly his outward deportment displayed a resigned and cheerful magnanimity worthy of the greatest writer of the age. On the very day after the calamity had been made known to him, a friend accosted him as he was on his way to the parliament house, and offered the condolences proper on such an unfortunate occasion. “It is very hard, certainly,” he replied, in his usual *thoughtful* voice, “thus to lose all the labours of a lifetime, and be made a poor man at last, when I ought to have been otherwise. But if God grant me health and strength for a few years longer, I have no doubt that I shall redeem it all.” “I had several letters from him,” says Allan Cunningham, “during these disastrous days; the language was cheerful, and there was no allusion to what had happened: all that he said about them was, ‘I miss my daughter Mrs. Lockhart, who used to sing to me—I have some need of her now.’”

It ought here to be mentioned, that Scott was the better enabled to carry his plans of rigorous retrenchment at this time into effect, by the death of lady Scott, which took place on the 15th May, 1826. This event, truth compels us to say, it was impossible to regard as a calamity, although Scott could not, at the moment, but feel the loss of the companion of thirty years and the mother of his children. If it affected him not otherwise very deeply, it served at least, by altering still more the views and circumstances of his life, to remind him of the rapid march of time, and all the inevitable changes and deprivations which attend its onward progress,—reflections little calculated to cheer the human bosom—least of all that of one who knew that the now limited period of his existence must be dedicated to unremitting exertions, from which he was to derive no benefit.

Scott had now attained his fifty-fifth year, a term of life when even the most robust begin to own the nipping frost of time, and feel the vigorous energy which inspires the frame of manhood decay. In our author's individual case, moreover, considering constitutional infirmity, and the mental afflictions with which he had been visited, perhaps we might date his comparative powers of exertion several years farther forward. Yet with a devoted alacrity of soul, and a steady determination of purpose, “above all Greek, above all Roman fame,” he now set himself down to the task of redeeming a debt of upwards of 120,000*l.*,

and amending his broken fortunes. The first object to which he naturally turned, was the completion of the works upon which he had been engaged previous to the bankruptcy of Constable & Co.; but a difficulty unfortunately arose to interrupt his labours at the very outset. By the agreements of the 7th March and 20th October, 1823, before given, our readers will have seen that Scott had contracted to write *two* works of fiction on certain terms. At the date of the bankruptcy, one of these had been proceeded in a little way, and advertised by Constable & Co., under the name of "Woodstock." The paper for printing the work had been sent by Constable & Co. to the printers, and the author himself had even received the amount of the price agreed on—in *bills*, as usual. In this state of matters, the trustee for the creditors of Constable & Co., claimed right to have the work thus contracted and paid for completed for the benefit of those whom he represented, stating his readiness to fulfil Constable & Co.'s part of the contract by publishing the work. The trustee for the creditors of Sir Walter Scott on the other hand maintained, that the contract had been voided by the bankruptcy of the purchasers and publishers of the work, and their consequent inability to perform their part of the contract; that the payment of the price was not the only obligation incumbent on them; that they were bound to publish the works, which they could not do; and that, when the author contracted with them, he had a reference to advantages which he would derive from their being the publishers, but which could not be obtained from the trustee for their creditors; that he had a material interest in the books being properly published, both with reference to his fame as an author, and his reversionary interest of the works. He admitted that in the cases where the price had been paid, he was bound to repay the money advanced, or to account for it; but he denied that there was any obligation on him to deliver the works in question to be published by the trustee for the creditors of Messrs. Constable & Co. Scott himself adopted the same view of the matter as his trustee, and resolutely said, "The work is in my head, and sooner than they shall have it, there it shall remain." It certainly would have been a curious process to compel him, against his will, to bring himself to bed of a work of fiction. The matter was referred to arbitration, and Scott's creditors in the meanwhile advised that the novel, as well as the "Life of Bonaparte," should be completed without delay, and it was agreed betwixt them and the creditors of Constable & Co., that the proceeds should be lodged in neutral hands until the point in dispute should be decided. It may perhaps be interesting to those curious in literary transactions to see the estimate set down by the creditors of Ballantyne & Co., as the probable product of these works. What follows is taken from the "Estimates of funds that may accrue to Ballantyne & Co., within the

year;" and the calculation gives us some idea of the average value of the Waverley novels.

*"Produce of new works by Sir Walter Scott, at present in the course of publication."*

|                                               |         |              |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| 1. "Woodstock," 3 vols., 9500; shop           |         |              |
| price 31s. 6d. boards                         | £14,962 | 10 0         |
| Deduct one-third to reduce to trade-          |         |              |
| price, and cover expenses of                  |         |              |
| sale                                          | £4987   | 10 0         |
| Cost of paper and printing (same as           |         |              |
| Redgauntlet)                                  | 2225    | 0 0          |
| Sum to cover contingencies                    | 1000    | 0 0          |
|                                               |         | <hr/>        |
|                                               |         | 8212 10 0    |
|                                               |         | <hr/>        |
| Remains                                       |         | 6750 0 0     |
| Add value of copyright after first impression |         | 1300 0 0     |
|                                               |         | <hr/>        |
| Produce of Woodstock                          |         | £8050 0 0    |
|                                               |         | <hr/>        |
| 2. Life of Napoleon Bonaparte, 5              |         |              |
| vols.* 8vo. 8000 copies; shop                 |         |              |
| price 52s. 6d. boards                         | £21,000 | 0 0          |
| Deduct one-third as above                     | £7000   | 0 0          |
| Ditto for paper, &c.                          | 3706    | 0 0          |
| Ditto for contingencies                       | 1200    | 0 0          |
|                                               |         | <hr/>        |
|                                               |         | 11,906 0 0   |
|                                               |         | <hr/>        |
|                                               |         | 9094 0 0     |
| Add value of copyright after first edition    |         | 2166 13 4    |
|                                               |         | <hr/>        |
| Produce of Bonaparte's Life                   |         | £11,260 13 4 |

The preceding calculation was pretty nearly correct in both instances, although the plan of the larger work was afterwards so much altered as entirely to nullify the above estimate. "Woodstock" was quickly completed, and we find that at a meeting held on the 26th May, of the creditors of Ballantyne & Co., Mr. Gibson, (Scott's agent,) "reported particulars of the sale of Woodstock, 7900 copies of which had been sold to Hurst & Robertson at £6500; but they being unable to complete the bargain, they had been transferred to Longman & Co. on

\* This was the original size agreed on.

the same terms. The money had been paid, and was deposited with Sir William Forbes & Co., to wait the issue of the decision as to the respective claims of Constable & Co. and Sir Walter Scott's trustees. The remainder of the impression had been sold to Constable & Co.'s trustees at 18s. 6d. each copy, at a credit of ten months from delivery, with five per cent. discount for any earlier payment, of which the trustees approved. In consequence of advice from Sir Walter Scott and Longman & Co., it had been thought advisable to restrict the first edition of the life of Napoleon to 6000, instead of 8000 copies, as originally intended." We may here state shortly, that the question of right to these works was ultimately decided in favour of Scott's trustees.

In this year, 1826, Scott performed an invaluable service to his country by the successful resistance of his pen to a proposed measure of government. This was Mr. Canning's project for abolishing the small-note currency of Scotland, and assimilating the monetary system to that of England. Violent opposition was of course offered to this proposal by the Scottish public, but as their opinions were viewed by the legislature as emanating only from selfishness, there seemed little probability of their remonstrances being at all attended to. In this dilemma, Scott (being no doubt urged by feelings of gratitude towards those connected with the banks, as well as more patriotic motives) stepped forward, and in three successive letters inserted in the *Weekly Journal* newspaper, (published by his friend Mr. Ballantyne,) he so thoroughly exposed the absurdity of the parliamentary scheme, that notwithstanding the powerful support of Mr. Croker, and other financial writers, the legislature at once dropped all further thoughts of proceeding with it. The letters had the sonorous and euphonic signature of "Malachi Malagrowther" attached to them, but contained so many palpable traits of Scott's peculiar humour, pathos, and sarcasm, that there was not a moment's doubt concerning their paternity. The author's own feelings, as we learn from a gentleman then connected with Mr. Ballantyne's establishment, were excited in an unusual degree on this occasion. Two days after the first letter had appeared, he was in the printing-house with his friend Mr. Ballantyne, when the latter remarked, that he had been more solicitous and careful about the *proof* of this little composition, than he had ever observed him to be respecting any of his productions. "Yes," said he, in a tone that electrified even this familiar friend, who had heard him speak before under all varieties of circumstances, "my former works were for myself, but this—*this is for my country!*"

## CHAPTER VIII.

FROM THE DISCLOSURE OF THE WAVERLEY SECRET IN FEBRUARY, 1827,  
TO THE DEATH OF SIR WALTER SCOTT, IN SEPTEMBER, 1832.

"WOODSTOCK" was the last of Scott's works in which he appeared under the mysterious guise of the "Author of Waverley;" for although the necessary investigation into the books of Ballantyne & Co. had clearly established the paternity of these productions, those concerned did not perhaps reckon it altogether prudent to tear the veil at once from the face of the Great Unknown, whose magic pen had hitherto been so prolific a source of wealth. The public were therefore left in a sort of dubious twilight on the subject; a wavering betwixt doubt and certainty, more tantalising even than their previous state of complete ignorance.

It is certainly not one of the least remarkable circumstances connected with these novels, that the mystery of their authorship should have been so long and faithfully preserved, considering the number of individuals to whom the truth was undoubtedly known. Scott himself speaks of some score of persons to whom the secret was imparted; but many more than either he or they dreamt of, were privy to it, several of whom, to our certain knowledge, although they acquired their information quite accidentally, yet did so in spite of the most anxious precautions to keep them in ignorance, and were therefore no way bound by the laws of friendly and honourable confidence from communicating the fact to the public. We could mention many instances of this spontaneous and unsolicited secrecy, but shall only state one, as being equally illustrative of the trivial casualties which will sometimes baffle the "best laid schemes of mice and men," and of the honour of the individual immediately concerned. A gentleman, who happened to be in the establishment of Ballantyne and Company, one day, at the time when the public curiosity—including his own—respecting the mysterious author was at its height, picked up, while walking through the compositors' room, a small slip of paper, which he was just about to toss away again, when his eye caught the autograph of Scott, with which he was well acquainted. It proved to be a card from him to Ballantyne, the back, or address, of which was torn off. It began, "Dear James," and consisted only of two sentences; but these were sufficiently explanatory of the great Waverley secret. The first alluded to the return of the last proof



sheets of the novel then passing through the press; and the second conveyed the brief intimation,—“I have already laid another vessel on the stocks.” This individual preserved his secret for upwards of six years,—in short, until Scott himself divulged it,—when the writer of these pages heard the fact, then for the first time stated, from his own lips.

Innumerable anecdotes are told of the attempts made to surprise Scott into an acknowledgment of his identity with the “Author of Waverley;” but all accounts agree as to the inimitable readiness and composure with which he baffled them. To those who had the boldness directly to impeach him with the fact, he hesitated not at once to reply by a broad denial. He considered, he said, that as they had no right to ask such a question, they had just as little right to expect a candid answer. This may be reckoned somewhat at variance with a due regard to the strict laws of truth; but how was it possible for one in Scott’s situation to protect himself otherwise? In questions of authorship, an equivocation, or half-denial, subjects the accused to the risk of misconstruction, incalculably more injurious and degrading in the public eye, and (if he be a man of correct feeling) in the opinion of himself, than the suspicion of a downright falsehood. Can there be any meanness more despicable than that of a man allowing himself to be supposed entitled to that credit which he is conscious is the right of another? Yet to such an imputation would Scott have subjected himself had he descended to quibble and equivocate. The severest trial of this nature to which he was ever exposed, was undoubtedly on the following occasion:—About the year 1817, when the fame of the novels was at the highest, and public curiosity still anxious about them, Scott was on a visit to London, and had the honour of dining with the Prince Regent at Carlton House. Lord Lowther, Mr. Croker, and several others, were of the party. After dinner, the Prince filled a glass, and said, “I have neither a blessed bear, nor yet a tappit hen, (see Waverley,) but I have, at least, as good claret as ever the Baron of Bradwardine had, and in that claret I drink to the health of the greatest genius of my country, the Author of Waverley.” The toast was, of course, duly honoured, as toasts of princes generally are, and every one waited with some curiosity to know what Mr. Scott would do. He stood up and said, that he did not pretend to misunderstand what his Royal Highness meant, and accepted the intended compliment with gratitude; but, “Sire, I am *not* the Author of Waverley.” The Prince immediately rejoined, “I am excessively happy to hear it, because I now find that I reckon *two* of the greatest men of Europe as my subjects, instead of *one*,—I have now *both* the author of the ‘Lady of the Lake,’ and the Author of ‘Waverley.’” The Prince, from that time forward, always maintained that the novels could not have been written by Scott, because he held it im-

possible that any body should take the liberty of mystifying him. Sir Walter, on the other hand, said, that the Prince had no right to pry into the secret, which he would have confided to him without any scruple, if they had been alone, but which he had no notion of publishing before company—especially when that company comprised people in any way connected with literary pursuits. Besides, he used to add, ‘they were a’ half fou.’

But it was seldom that Scott was arraigned in this trying manner; and his presence of mind, and readiness of remark, enabled him to defeat all the numerous indirect, though often well-laid snares, to entrap him into a disclosure of his mystery; and, in fact, he said himself, he never recollected being in pain or confusion on the subject. It was said, that he was once thrown off his guard in a conversation with Lord Byron\* in the shop of Mr. Murray the publisher, and made a remark tantamount to an admission of his being the author of the novels, which he himself immediately observed, and “covered his confusion by a precipitate retreat;” but our author solemnly declares in his introduction to the recent edition of “Waverley,” that he had no recollection of such a scene taking place, which, as he justly observes, could scarcely have been the case had it ever occurred. The point from which Scott ran the greatest risk of discovery, was his introducing into his narratives conversational remarks, and scenes which had occurred in his own presence, more particularly in the company of his familiar friends and acquaintances. Thus we have seen, that Hogg found him out by the dissertation about long sheep and short sheep, in the introduction to the “Black Dwarf.” From that time forth, the Shepherd, as he added the successive novels to his library at Altrive Lake, had them bound up with the unequivocal title, “SCOTT’S NOVELS,” stamped on their back. Scott happened to visit the Bard of Yarrow after the latter had continued this practice for several years, and observing this laconic index to the contents of the volumes, remarked with great gravity, “What a stupid fellow of a bookbinder yours must be, Jamie, to spell *Scott’s* with two *t’s*.” “Ah! Wattie, Wattie!” returned Hogg, turning on his friend a look of chuckling glee, “I’m ower auld a cat to draw that strae before!” At one time the Shepherd’s bile was so much irritated by the pertinacity with which Scott preserved his incognito, that he set to and drew up a body of evidence on the subject, sufficient, as he thought to render further disavowal of the truth, at least to him, altogether ridiculous. This modern “Cloud of Witnesses” the compiler handed to Mr. Laidlaw to be shown to Scott, who merely remarked, without the slightest discomposure,—“Very ingenious—very ingenious, indeed.” Hogg had too

\* *Vide* “Medwyn’s Conversations.”

much proper feeling to give his catalogue of proofs to the world; but it is said that several of them, pointing out some of Scott's grammatical peculiarities, were so startlingly just, that they had the effect of making him avoid the same marks of identity in a great measure afterwards. One old lady, of no mean pretensions to literary talent, caused Scott incessant annoyance, for a considerable time, by the ostentatious manner in which she went gadding about amongst the fashionable coteries of Auld Reekie upon the publication of every new work, telling every one of her absolute assurance of Scott being the author, and pointing out particular passages as being supplied to him by herself in the course of conversation. There was really some slight truth in the latter assertion, and Scott therefore bore with her impertinent chattering for a long time, with great patience,—for of course, every thing of this sort was most industriously collected and repeated to him by those “d——d good-natured friends,” of whom Sir Fretful Plagiary complains,—until one day, upon being told of a fresh instance of her provoking gossip, he exclaimed with more irritation than he was ever known to betray on a similar occasion,—“The auld hag! As if she had never bothered any body but me with her cursed lang-winded stories.” This remark being duly reported to the party concerned, and losing, as may be imagined, nothing of its original harshness by the repetition, had the effect of relieving him from one source of annoyance at least.

We could fill pages with anecdotes on this head, but most of them have been so long familiar to the world, that it is unnecessary to recapitulate them. One of the most singular facts connected with the subject, was the delusion under which many even of those who participated in “the secret,” laboured with respect to the actual composing, or putting together, of the tales. Being aware, that he had assistance from various quarters in the collecting of his materials, they likewise imagined he must have received aid in filling up his narratives. It seemed as impossible to them as to the rest of the world, that he could otherwise have put such a mass of writing through his hands. Amongst others, the author's brother, Thomas,\* long enjoyed a large share of this spurious credit, nor does it appear that he ever endeavoured to correct the error. But a still more absurd report was at one time very generally propagated, assigning to Lady Scott a large share of her husband's literary toil. It was

\* By an omission in an early part of our Memoir, which we have had no suitable opportunity of correcting until now, it was neglected to be stated that it was the misfortunes of this relative, while practising as a law-agent in Edinburgh, which hastened the publication of *Marmion*:—a circumstance only obscurely hinted at by Scott, to account for some of the imperfections of that work, but which, had he explained it in full, would have revealed a specimen of fraternal affection rarely if ever equaled.

confidently asserted, that she contributed most of the episodic rhymes in the novels,—nay, that she had written one entire canto of the “Lady of the Lake!” This ridiculous rumour was current about the year 1817, and found very appropriate countenance and support from the marvel-loving journalists on the other side of the Atlantic. The truth is, that no literary man was perhaps ever mated with one less capable or less inclined to further his intellectual labours. No two minds can be imagined of more dissimilar elements than those of the great novelist and his wife,—and of this, the following short anecdote, although trifling in itself, is yet forcibly illustrative. Walking together, one fine spring morning, through the parks at Abbotsford, where beves of lambs were frisking about in the sunshine, Sir Walter’s “lungs began to crow like chanticler,” with the beauties of the pastoral scene around him; and upon one particularly fine lamb coming confidently close up to them, he exclaimed in the fulness of his benevolent emotions, “What a beautiful and innocent-looking creature, Charlotte!” “It is, indeed,” responded the lady, in a reciprocally earnest tone of voice,—“*wouldn’t it make a fine pie!*” “Oh God!” ejaculated her husband, as if the odour of the shambles had been suddenly placed under his nostrils. The lady, we have reason to believe, was aware of the nature of his literary occupations, but the only instance we have ever heard of her testifying the slightest interest in them, was her one day asking him to “set to and write another of his old-fashioned stories, as she was much in need of a new drawing-room carpet.” Indeed, there is some reason to suspect that her ladyship did not even read the whole of her husband’s romances. At least we have it from a sure source, that in August, 1822, many months after the publication of the “FORTUNES OF NIGEL,” and long after the ‘whole world’ (in fashionable phraseology) had eagerly devoured it, her ladyship was slowly wading through the second volume as a duty she felt necessary to perform in order to sustain her part in conversation. Upon the same gentleman, who mentioned this circumstance (and who had the most undoubted means of knowing), being asked whether Sir Walter concerned himself about his lady’s studies or employments, he replied decidedly, “Never a moment!”

As will sometimes happen, however, the very indifference which Lady Scott testified respecting her husband’s labours contributed to confirm many in the belief of her secretly assisting him; and, what will scarcely be credited, even her own family were of the number. Mr. Laidlaw told a friend of ours, that Miss Scott, (now Mrs. Lockhart,) who, whatever were her *suspicions*, was as really ignorant of the Waverley secret as the world was in general, once mentioned to him the circumstance of her mother’s copy of the novels remaining so long uncut in her chamber, as confirming her belief, not only that her father was the

author of them, but that her mother must be privy to the mystery, if not actually assisting in their compilation: arguing, that if she had not known every thing about them beforehand, she must have shared in the curiosity to peruse them, evinced by every body else, upon their publication.

But the time was now arrived when it became impossible longer to wear the veil of mystery in which he had so long successfully shrouded himself. The investigations into the affairs of Constable and Ballantyne disclosed the fact beyond a doubt, and would have rendered further disavowal on the author's part as ridiculous as vain. Still, for the reasons before alluded to, the parties chiefly interested did not think it prudent to blaze forth the secret to the million, and the fact remained hovering betwixt doubt and certainty for nearly a twelvemonth afterwards. As this is perhaps the last opportunity we will have of introducing a quotation from his pen, we will allow him to state the manner and occasion of his revealing himself in his own simple language.\*

"It was," says he, "my original intention never to have avowed these works during my life-time, and the original manuscripts were carefully preserved (though by the care of others rather than mine) with the purpose of supplying the necessary evidence of the truth when the period of announcing it should arrive.† But the affairs of my publishers having unfortunately passed into a management different from their own, I had no right any longer to rely upon secrecy in that quarter; and thus my mask, like Aunt Dinah's in 'Tristram Shandy,' having begun to wax a little threadbare about the chin, it became time to lay it aside with a good grace, unless I desired it should fall in pieces from my face, which was now become likely. Yet I had not the slightest intention of selecting the time and place in which the disclosure was finally made; nor was there the slightest concert between my learned and respected friend Lord Meadowbank and myself upon that occasion. It was, as the reader is probably aware, upon the 23d of February last, at a public meeting called for establishing a professional Theatrical Fund in Edinburgh, that the communication took place. Just before we sat down to table, Lord Meadowbank‡ asked me privately whether I was still anxious to preserve my incognito on the subject of what were called the Waverley Novels? I did not immediately see the purpose of his lordship's question, although I might certainly have been led to infer it, and replied that the secret had now of necessity become known to so

\* Introduction to *Chronicles of the Canongate*, Oct. 1827.

† "These manuscripts are at present (August, 1831) advertised for public sale, which is an addition, though a small one, to other annoyances."

‡ One of the Supreme Judges of Scotland, termed Lords of Council and Session. He was also one of the Criminal Judges, termed Lords of Justiciary.

many people, that I was indifferent on the subject. Lord Meadowbank was thus induced, while doing me the great honour of proposing my health to the meeting, to say something on the subject of these novels, so strongly connecting them with me as the author, that by remaining silent, I must have stood convicted, either of the actual paternity, or of the still greater crime of being supposed willing to receive indirectly praise to which I had no just title. I thus found myself suddenly and unexpectedly placed in the confessional, and had the task of avowing myself to the numerous and respectable company assembled, as the sole and unaided author of these novels of *Waverley*, the paternity of which was likely at one time to have formed a controversy of some celebrity, for the ingenuity with which some instructors of the public gave their assurance on the subject, was extremely persevering."

The eulogy with which Lord Meadowbank prefaced his toast was a brief but splendid one, and our inability, from want of room to insert it here, would cause us much regret, were it not for its being given, with a full report of all the convivial proceedings of the meeting, amongst the introductory matter to the last edition of the "*Chronicles of the Canongate*." Scott's reply, however, on this interesting and memorable occasion, imperatively demands a place. He said "he did not think that, in coming here to-day, he would have the task of acknowledging before three hundred gentlemen, a secret which, considering that it was communicated to more than twenty people, had been remarkably well kept. He was now before the bar of his country, and might be understood to be on trial before Lord Meadowbank as an offender; yet he was sure that every impartial jury would bring in a verdict of Not Proven. He did not now think it necessary to enter into the reason of his long silence. Perhaps caprice might have a considerable share in it. He had now to say, however, that the merits of these works, if they had any, and their faults, were entirely imputable to himself. He was afraid to think on what he had done. 'Look on't again—I dare not.' He had thus far embosomed himself, and he knew that it would be reported to the public. He meant, then, seriously to state, that when he said he was the author, he was the sole and undivided author. With the exception of quotations, there was not a single word that was not derived from himself, or suggested in the course of his reading.† The

\* In his more leisurely explanation in his introduction to the "*Chronicles of the Canongate*," Scott says, "While I take on myself all the merits and defects attending these compositions, I am bound to acknowledge with gratitude hints of subjects and legends, which I have received from various quarters, and have occasionally used as a foundation of my fictitious compositions, or woven up with them in the shape of episodes." He then mentions several friends from whom he received obligations of this nature,—and particularly Mr. Train, super-

wand was now broken, and the book buried. You will allow me further to say, with Prospero, it is your breath that has filled my sails." He concluded by proposing the health of Mr. Mackay, of the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, as "his friend Bailie Nicol Jarvie," being the character in which that excellent actor and individual first acquired celebrity.

The sensation excited in the meeting, (of which Scott himself was chairman,) by the above announcement, is described to us as venting itself, in sounds resembling rather yells of delight, than mere shouts of applause. And no marvel,—considering the occasion was that of a Scotsman telling his countrymen, face to face, that they had amongst them the greatest writer of the age—even he himself, who (to use the words of Lord Meadowbank) had conferred a new reputation on their national character, and bestowed on Scotland an imperishable name, were it only by her having given birth to himself.

All broad Scotland—we may say, all Britain, sympathised in the exultation of the audience, at a disclosure which, we fear, somewhat blunted the general regret for the proximate cause of its being made. It was covered up by a more elaborate explanation in his preface to the "Chronicles of the Canongate," (the first series of which appeared in the autumn of the same year,) which we have had such frequent occasion to quote from and refer to during the course of our memoir.

The "Life of Napoleon" appeared in August, 1827, being extended to nine, instead of its originally intended limits of five volumes. In the latter end of 1826, he had visited the Continent, with his daughter, Miss Anne Scott, for the purpose of making himself acquainted with many local and historical details connected with his work, and gleaning information from those personally engaged in the transactions which it recorded. At Paris, he was received by the family of Charles X. with every mark of honour and respect, and every facility was placed at his disposal by that unfortunate monarch for assisting him in the object of his visit. We wish we could say as much for those courtiers and general officers to whom Scott was necessarily obliged to have recourse for the information required. From the tenor of the work, it is beyond a doubt that many of the facts upon which various parts of the narrative were founded, emanated from prejudiced sources. Scott was thus misled in many important particulars; and it was doubtless his consciousness of, and regret for, this unwitting fault, that induced him in his latter will and testament to bequeath to his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart, the duty of "correcting and cutting down the Life of Bonaparte to a less size,

visor of excise, now at Castle-Douglas, to whom he was indebted for many interesting traditions and sketches worked into the novels.

which may be done with a prospect of considerable advantage, or to suggest some competent person to do so." Until this is done, therefore, the work can hardly be pronounced a finished or standard one; but with all its faults it is a splendid production, and worthy of its illustrious author. No half dozen of his works cost him, from first to last, nearly so much trouble and anxiety as this biography, and he became terribly tired of it before the conclusion. Some of the MS. which he had sent one day to the printing office, was somehow or other lost, and gave him infinite vexation in the re-writing, being quite unable to recollect what he had previously said. After this accident, he always transmitted a note to Ballantyne of the copy sent; and one of these, containing an obijuration sufficiently evincing the impatience with which he was labouring at his task, we are enabled to give:—"Dear James,—I send copy Nap. pp. ; I have clapped him in Elba—damn him." With all its imperfections, and the positive prejudices with which it was received by the public, the work is understood to have produced about 12,000*l.*, a sum which soon after enabled him, with the addition of other earnings and accessory sources, to pay to his creditors a dividend amounting to one-third of their original claims—or six shillings and eight pence in the pound. It must be recollected, however, that the interest on the enormous principal had been all the while accumulating.

In October, 1827, the first series of the "Chronicles of the Canongate" were published, in two volumes; consisting (besides a biographical sketch of the imaginary chronicler, Chrystal Croftangry, Esq.) of three tales, entitled "The Highland Widow," "The Two Drovers," and "The Surgeon's Daughter." In the last edition of the novels, the latter tale has been placed as the concluding volume of all, and in its former locality have been substituted three detached pieces, respectively called "My Aunt Margaret's Mirror," "The Tapestry Chamber," and "The Laird's Jock," which appeared in the Keepsake in 1828. With the exception of "The Surgeon's Daughter," these pieces are mere sketches, but all of them distinguished by fewer or more traits of our author's incomparable power of narrative. The larger tale—the materials of which were furnished by Mr. Train—is one of the most interesting of all the author's productions, and is peculiarly remarkable for the felicitous facility with which he transfers his characters from the rural quiet and homely scenes of an obscure Scottish village to the pomp and pageantry of an eastern court,—yet preserves them the same amid every change of fortune and situation. In the same year in which these tales appeared, Scott also contributed a preface to the "Memoirs of La Rochejacqueline" for Constable's Miscellany.

In 1828, a second series of the "Chronicles of the Canongate," in three volumes, was published. These contained "The Fair Maid of



Perth"—a work far superior, in our estimation, to many of its predecessors, and which showed that our author's resources were as unlimited as ever. In November, the same year, he also published the first part of a juvenile History of Scotland, under the title of "Tales of a Grandfather," being addressed to his grandchild John Hugh Lockhart, whom he typified under the appellation of Hugh Littlejohn, Esq. This delightful work was completed by second and third parts—making altogether nine volumes—published respectively in 1829 and 1830, and forms one of the most useful and instructive juvenile publications in our language. In 1831 he added to these instructive tales another series on France, published also in three volumes, uniform with the former. Early in the year 1831 appeared "Anne of Geierstein," in three volumes; and, as if to show the combination of vigour and versatility which his intellect still retained, he published successively in the same year (in one volume each) two religious discourses, entitled "Sermons by a Layman," and an Essay on Gardening and Arboriculture! In the year following, he contributed an excellent "History of Scotland," in two volumes, to "Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia,"—and also, "Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft," in one volume, to Mr. Murray's "Family Library." Our readers may conceive how powerful must have been that principle of integrity and love of independence, which could stimulate a man on the verge of threescore to such astonishing exertions. Here we have, in the course of three years, that is to say, from the beginning of 1827 to the latter end of 1830, no less than nine-and-twenty *original volumes*—making nearly ten a-year—from his unassisted pen! It is almost frightful to contemplate the amount of mental labour he must have undergone in the process. But we have not yet stated the whole. Amongst the other projects started for the purpose of raising money, was one for republishing the whole of the "Waverley Novels" in a uniform and condensed size, illustrated by notes, prefaces and plates, and the whole revised and amended by the author. With this view, when the copyright of them was brought to the hammer, to the surprise of not a few, it was repurchased by one of the late partners of the firm of Constable and Co., at 8,400*l*. It soon appeared that this purchase was made by the trustees on account of Scott's creditors, and that the new edition was to be published for their behoof by the purchaser, Mr. Cadell. It accordingly began to appear in June, 1829, and so well was it adapted to the taste and convenience of the public, equally as to appearance, size, and price, that the sale soon reached an average of 23,000 copies. To give the reader an idea of the magnitude of this *concern*—commercially speaking—it may be stated, says Mr. Chambers, "that in the mere *production* of the work, not to speak of its *sale*, about 1000 persons, or nearly a hundredth part of the population of

Edinburgh were supported!" The volumes appeared in rapid succession, and so indefatigably did Scott labour at the editing of them, that, amid all the exertion necessary to produce his other original compositions, no less than nineteen were published by December, 1830—many of them containing notes and prefaces so copious, as, taken altogether, would form a bulky volume in themselves!

The profits of these volumes must have been very large, and the share of them which belonged to Scott's creditors, with the produce of his other works, enabled our author to pay a further dividend of three shillings in the pound, which, but for the grievous accumulation of interest, would have reduced his debts nearly one-half. 54,000*l.* had now been paid, *all of which, with the exception of 6000*l.* or 7000*l.* had been realised by Scott's individual exertions.* Besides all this, he had paid up the premiums upon the policies of insurance on his life for 22,000*l.* So strikingly honourable did Scott's conduct appear to his creditors, that, in the latter end of 1830, a general meeting was called, when it was unanimously agreed to present him with the library, manuscripts, furniture and plate of Abbotsford, all of which he had voluntarily surrendered to them at the time of his insolvency.

It was now evident that, but for some fatal intervention, Scott would speedily retrieve all the disasters which had befallen him; but alas! the labour necessary for such a consummation, came at a period of life when he was least able for the task. In November, 1830, he resigned his office as principal clerk of session, retaining, of course, the retiring or superannuation pension.\* His reason for taking this step was not the ostensible one of procuring ease and relief to himself from the duties of the office. It was for the purpose of *working harder than ever.* He found that the time devoted to his literary labours was more profitably employed than that consumed in his attendance in the parliament house; and he reckoned it a duty to his creditors to adopt the course which would be most immediately advantageous to them. With this magnanimous intention he retired to Abbotsford, where he set to work with a determined applicability that showed he considered every moment mis-spent which did not contribute to the accomplishment of his object. In fact, his intense anxiety may be said to have amounted to a passion; and it is known that at this period he generally worked for ten or twelve hours per day, and frequently fourteen! The effects of this superhuman labour began speedily to show themselves. He became unable to take even a moderate portion of exercise without ex-

\* It must be mentioned, to the credit of all parties concerned, that Earl Grey's government offered him a pension sufficient to make up the full amount of the usual salary: this Scott firmly declined; and the creditors, although perfectly entitled to remonstrate, did not once urge him to do violence to his political predilections.

haustion. His speech began to be affected; his contracted right foot became more painful,—in short, evident indications of approaching general paralysis manifested themselves. The best medical advice was called in, but his disease was beyond the reach of the healing art: it may be called a *fever of thought*,—it was only by moderating the fervid current of his ideas, that the bodily distemper could be alleviated, and to do this, defied the skill of pharmacy. His physicians remonstrated with him upon the dangerous tendency of such continual and arduous mental labour, but their advice was of little use, and in fact it seemed beyond his power to comply with it. Dr. Abercrombie, of Edinburgh, one day urged him most anxiously upon the necessity of moderating his exertions; “Sir Walter,” said he, “you must not write so constantly; really, sir, you must not work.” “I tell you what it is, Doctor,” replied the invalid, “Molly, when she puts the kettle on, may just as well say, ‘Kettle, kettle, don’t boil!’” The kind physician was at last compelled to threaten him with the probability of a fatal issue, if he persisted in keeping his mind so continually on the stretch. This intimation seems at the time to have had some effect upon him, as we see by a letter to a friend in Edinburgh, a few days afterwards, the original of which is now before us. It is dated March 7th, 1831, and, curious to say, the penmanship is much more legible and firm than most we have seen penned by him in his “best days.” The passage alluding to his illness is as follows:—“Dr. Abercrombie threatens me with death if I write so much; and die, I suppose, I must, if I give it up suddenly. I must assist Lockhart a little, for you are aware of our connexion, and he has always showed me the duties of a son; but, except that, and my own necessary work at the edition of the *Waverley* novels, as they call them, I can hardly pretend to be writing any thing,—for after all, this same dying is a ceremony one would put off as long as they could.” The rest of the letter is penned in a cheerful and even happy strain, alluding to the delight he had experienced from the recent visit of two mutual friends—ladies—to one of whom he had presented words for a Celtic air, of which she had expressed admiration. It was only a few days after this, that he received a shock from an occurrence, before slightly alluded to, which, beyond doubt, contributed greatly to shake his enfeebled powers of mind and body, and hasten the melancholy catastrophe which soon afterwards overtook him.

It need scarcely be mentioned that, as a high tory, Scott, like many other well meaning men, (as must be allowed,) contemplated with horror and alarm the measure of reform introduced into the House of Commons by Lord John Russell, in March, 1831, exceeding, as it did, in its provisions, even what the warmest advocates of the cause had anticipated. Immediately upon its divulgement, the freeholders of Rox-

burghshire, who, with few exceptions, were decided tories, held a meeting at Jedburgh, for the purpose of considering what was to be done in reference to the proposed change in the constitution; and Scott, although in the state of health we have described, thought himself bound to attend, and, as a sacred duty, record his condemnation of an act, which was tantamount to a revolution in the political condition of Britain. "A gentleman who was present on this occasion," says Mr. Chambers, "described his face as shrunk, ill-coloured, and unhealthy—his voice hollow and tremulous, and his whole frame feeble, shaken, and diminished. But, continued our informant, the leaven of lion-heart was still strong within him. He sat in evident disquiet during the speeches of the ministerialists, till near the end of the meeting. He then rose with much of his wonted dignity, when addressing an assembly, (for you know his manner then is eminently noble and graceful,) and told the meeting that he had come there that day with great reluctance, and at much personal inconvenience, as he had been for some time contending with severe indisposition.—'But, gentlemen,' said he, clenching his iron fist, and giving it an energetic downward motion, 'had I known that I should shed my blood on these boards, I would have spent my last breath in opposing this measure.' He proceeded farther to argue the inexpediency of following French political fashions, and ended by saying, 'I must take leave of you, gentlemen, and I shall do it in the well-known adage of the gladiator to the emperor—*MORITURUS VOS SALUTAT.*' In the course of this speech he was hissed by a few individuals who were present only as auditors—of which he took no notice; but in replying to the gentleman who rose next, when the sound was repeated, he turned quick upon those who were expressing their disapprobation, and said that he cared no more for their hissing than for the braying of the beasts of the field. His feelings, nevertheless, were so much affected, that, on his way home, he was observed to be in tears; and to the popular insult offered to him on this occasion—the first of the kind he had been subjected to in his life—together with his strong and excited feelings of evil augury for his country, we hesitate not to impute the acceleration of his fatal distemper.

He made another and more powerful effort, however, to stem, what he doubtless considered, the torrent of political disaster which threatened to overwhelm his native land; and it was one which, considering the lassitude and depression attending declining health and dejected spirits, showed the earnestness of his patriotism. The anecdote is thus narrated by our talented friend, John M'Diarmid, Esq., editor of the *Dumfries Courier*, in his usual felicitous manner:—"When the reform fever was at its height, a small conservative party in Selkirk and neighbourhood determined to get up a loyal and constitutional address, to be pre-

sented to both houses of parliament; and, as a matter of course, the sheriff of the county was respectfully requested to lend the ultras, or loyalists—no matter which—the aid of his felicitous and ever ready pen. The baronet accepted the invitation; set to work vigorously; plied his task continuously for the space of three days, and in the end produced a memorial, or petition, almost rivaling in bulk a single manuscript volume of the *Waverley* novels. That his heart was in his words, we do not, and cannot doubt for a moment; and accordingly, when the author had said all he felt and thought on the subject, he ordered his carriage and departed for Selkirk, where the parties interested were ready to receive him. The idea of having saved Britain and Ireland from a measure that threatened to level every ancient land-mark and long-cherished institution ‘at one fell swoop,’ as Scotland was saved from the dreaded infliction of a metallic currency, was no doubt cheering in the highest degree; and thus far there was no disparity of feeling, though some of those present looked rather askance when they gauged, by a single glance of the eye, the length, breadth, and depth of so formidable a memorial. To have read it out and out, would have required a pretty long soderunt, and before much progress had been made, some one remarked, ‘that a paper exceeding the reform bill itself in length, schedules and boundaries included, would infallibly, if received or listened to at all, be thrown aside on the recital of the prayer and title,’—a general feeling of embarrassment pervaded the assembly. Dr. Johnson tells a story of Addison, which we cannot resist alluding to here. The author, or editor, of the *Spectator*, who acted at one time as under secretary of state, on being asked to pen some particular paper, spent so much time over it in selecting happy phrases, and balancing sentences, that his superiors would not wait the slow progress of mental parturition; and the biographer adds, that at last a common clerk executed with ease, in an every-day style, what proved too hard for the illustrious Addison. And so it fared on the present occasion. The clerk to the meeting, although peradventure no great scribe, did the needful on the principle that brevity is the soul of wisdom, as well as of wit; and strange to say, his petition superseded that of the great author of *Waverley*. But the cream of the story follows. The baronet himself felt nowise displeased; having disburdened his mind, said his say, and made a clean breast, he was not a man to be put out of humour by ‘rejected addresses,’ but on the contrary, told every one what had happened as a good joke—another striking proof of his habitual serenity and equanimity of temper.”

From this time forward, however, Scott’s indisposition grew rapidly worse, and what occasioned no less surprise than additional distress to his friends,—his temper, hitherto so gentle, kind, and almost impertur-

bable, became peevish and fretful in the extreme. We have reason to believe, however, that this remarkable change of disposition arose, in a great measure, from his beholding the gradual accomplishment of those political theories which he regarded with so much horror, and from his strong and excited feelings of evil foreboding for the welfare of his native land. In a letter to a friend, at this time, (now in our possession,) he says,—“Although it is said in the newspapers, I am actually far from well; and instead of being exercising on a brother novelist, Chateaubriand, my influence to decide him to raise an insurrection in France, which is the very probable employment allotted to me by some of the papers, I am keeping my head as cool as I can, and speaking with some difficulty. I am much out riding, or rather crawling, about my plantations, when the weather will permit.” The epistle concludes with the following affecting expression:—“I have owed you a letter longer than I intended, but I write with pain, and general (ly) use the hand of a friend. I sign with my initials as enough to represent the poor half of me which is left.—But I am still much yours. W. S.”

The penmanship of this card shows distinctly the rapid progress of his illness. The writing is indistinct—the lines uneven—some of the words wrong spelt, and the letters of several of them confusedly jumbled together, as if the writer was unable to recollect the due order of their arrangement. Yet he still continued to labour on. A fourth series of the “Tales of My Landlord,” appeared during the summer, in four volumes, respectively entitled “Count Robert of Paris,” and “Castle Dangerous,” and he managed to complete the revising, prefacing, and annotating of all his previous novels. The two additional tales—the last that emanated from his genius—are unquestionably the most faulty and uninteresting of all Scott’s productions, and bear melancholy evidence of the gradual obscuring of his intellect. In both, there are some splendid passages, excelled by none in any of his other writings, but the conducting of the plot and action is lamentably defective; there is a hesitation in the narrative, and a tedious dwelling on particular scenes, like a man of imperfect vision groping his way through an unknown and dangerous road, pausing at places where his footing is secure, and from which he, with difficulty, induces himself to move onward. In fact, while engaged with the last of these tales, the symptoms of his disorder became so violent, that his physicians declared nothing but a complete estrangement from all mental labour, and that for a considerable time, could afford him the slightest chance of recovery. The only possible means of accomplishing this, seemed to be, by removing him entirely away from the scenes of his previous labours, and from all the exciting associations therewith connected,—and a residence in Italy was recommended. When this proposal was made to him, he expressed the ut-

most repugnance to it—plainly stating his conviction that he would die during the probation of the experiment, and expressing the liveliest fears, that his bones would,—to use the expression of our national ballad—“be laid far from the Tweed.” By the urgent importunity of friends, he was at last induced to consent: but a new difficulty presented itself,—a requisite mode of accomplishing the journey. The invalid was utterly unfit for bearing the jolting over the rough roads of France and Italy, and it seemed impossible to find a suitable conveyance by sea. In this dilemma, the natural anxiety of his publisher, Mr. Cadell, suggested to him the possibility of procuring a passage in a man-of-war, and he accordingly wrote to Captain Basil Hall, then in London, soliciting his interest with the government in obtaining this favour; and so zealously did that scientific individual bestir himself in the matter, that in three hours after receiving Mr. Cadell’s letter, he had got the required object accomplished, and was enabled to write an answer by the same day’s post, communicating that his majesty had ordered a free passage to Malta for Sir Walter and his daughter, in the *Barham* frigate. As the vessel was then busily preparing for her voyage, no time was to be lost, and Sir Walter accordingly bade adieu to Abbotsford in October, with a melancholy,—and, alas! truthful,—foreboding of the fate which awaited him. Of this sorrowful presage he has left an affecting testimonial in the following postscript to the last of his productions, “*Castle Dangerous*:”—

“The gentle reader is acquainted that these are, in all probability, the last tales which it will be the lot of the author to submit to the public. He is now on the eve of visiting foreign parts; a ship of war is commissioned by its royal master to carry the author of *Waverley* to climates in which he may possibly obtain such a restoration of health as may serve him to spin his thread to an end in his own country. Had he continued to prosecute his usual literary labours, it seems indeed probable that, at the term of years he has already attained, the bowl, to use the pathetic language of scripture, would have been broken at the fountain; and little can one, who has enjoyed on the whole an uncommon share of the most inestimable of worldly blessings, be entitled to complain, that life, advancing to its period, should be attended with its usual proportion of shadows and storms. They have affected him at least in no more painful manner than is inseparable from the discharge of this part of the debt of humanity. Of those whose relation to him in the ranks of life might have insured him their sympathy under indisposition, many are now no more; and those who may yet follow in his wake, are entitled to expect, in bearing inevitable evils, an example of firmness and patience, more especially on the part of one who has enjoyed no small good fortune during the course of his pilgrimage. The

public have claims on his gratitude, for which the author of *Waverley* has no adequate means of expression; but he may be permitted to hope that the powers of his mind, such as they are, may not have a different date from his body; and that he may again meet his patronising friends, if not exactly in his old fashion of literature, at least in some branch which may not call forth the remark, that—

‘Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage.’”

One, and certainly not the least burdensome of the many sources of domestic trouble occasioned to the family at Abbotsford, at this time, by its master's illness, was the immense number of letters of enquiry which poured in from all quarters of Great Britain, and indeed from many parts of the continent. These averaged upwards of three hundred per week for some time; and being most punctiliously answered it may be imagined what a toil was thus devolved on the family.

Scott reached London by easy stages, being accompanied by his eldest son and his daughter Anne; and thence proceeded to Portsmouth, escorted by Captain Hall, who, in the third volume of his “*Fragments of Voyages and Travels*,” has given an interesting account of all the incidents during this journey, and previous to the embarkation. At one of the stages, a blind horse ran against Sir Walter, threw him violently to the ground, and nearly killed him on the spot. “What a fate would this have been!” truly observes the enthusiastic chronicler, “had the author of *Waverley*, perhaps the foremost man of all the world, been trodden to death by a decayed post-horse!”

Our author's reception at Portsmouth, and the anxious preparations made for his accommodation on board the *Barham*, were alike honourable to the illustrious invalid, and worthy of the generous liberality of the English nation. “The lieutenant-governor, Sir Colin Campbell, (says Captain Hall,) and the other local authorities, called upon him almost as if he had been a royal personage, to place at his disposal all the means in their power to render his stay at Portsmouth pleasant. The port-admiral, Sir Thomas Foley, waited on him to say, that his yacht, and the flag-ship's barge, were at his orders, should he or his family wish to sail about. The commissioner, also, Sir Michael Seymour, offered his services, and begged to know if there was any thing in the dockyard which he wished to see.”—The lords of the admiralty happened to be at Portsmouth on a tour of inspection, and they, too, waited upon Sir Walter to learn if any thing further could be done to meet his wishes. All these attentions were to Sir Walter, in his immoveable modesty, fully as much matter of anxiety as of gratification. “He wondered,” he said, “why all this fuss was made about one poor individual.” During the few days of his residence ashore, however, he reco-



vered his usual spirits so much, that, but for the continued weakness in his foot, a stranger would have reckoned him in perfect health. On the morning of his embarkation,—the 29th of October,—Captain Hall says, he had never seen him so cheerful, and even animated. “Ever and anon, as any one came into the room to pick up things, he was sure to fire off some good-humoured scold about the sin of tardiness, and the proverbial length of time it took to get ladies under weigh, with their endless bonnets and band-boxes. No one of us escaped, indeed, male or female. But there ran through all his observations such an air of humour and drollery, mixed occasionally with a slight dash of caustic sarcasm in the funny style of his own dear Antiquary, that the resemblance was at times complete. In short, there appeared so little trace of illness, that the hopes of his ultimate and full recovery seemed, for the hour, to rest on surer foundations than ever.”—But, alas! it was soon seen that all this was merely a temporary blazing up of the expiring lamp. When the ship was getting under weigh, and the hour of departure from his native shore was arrived, “I shall not soon forget,” says Captain Hall, “the great man’s last look, while he held his friends successively by the hand, as he sat on the deck of the frigate, and wished us good-bye, one after another, in a tone which showed that he at least knew all hope was over!”

Scott’s voyage to Malta, accompanied by his son and daughter, Captain and Miss Scott, was short and pleasant, and his health seemed gradually to improve during its continuance. We have now before us a long detail by one of the officers of the Barham, of every thing which occurred during this voyage; but there is little of interest to be mentioned, beyond the fact, that whilst all on board vied with each other in attending to the wants, and anticipating the wishes, of their idolised passenger, he, on the other hand, exhibited the most grateful sense of the attention shown him, and seemed daily to gain renovated strength and spirits. The day before the ship reached Malta, it made (in nautical phraseology) the then newly formed, and since extinct, volcanic eruption, called “Graham’s Island,” where Sir Walter landed and examined that singular phenomenon with great interest. The enthusiasm of the Maltese, upon the ship’s arrival, (having previously got notice of its precious freight,) was inconceivable. As he entered the town, a public officer with his attendants met him, and delivered a long speech in the name of the inhabitants, welcoming him to the island, and concluding with a request that he would *immortalise* it by writing its history! He was afterwards earnestly solicited to sit for his bust, but declined the compliment, on account of his being so much busied with writing. Maltese ingenuity, however, contrived to get over this obstacle. The landlord of the house where Sir Walter lodged was employed, and ma-

naged to get his desk and writing materials so placed, as to be opposite the door of an adjoining apartment, the *key-hole* of which was left open—and through this aperture the artist managed to accomplish his object—with what success we never heard. After some stay at Malta, where he frequently examined with great interest the armoury of the palace, in which are preserved several suits of the old knights' armour, he proceeded to Naples in the *Barham*. They passed through the straits of Messina, and stood close in to the volcanic island *Stromboli*, which, near midnight, (as it happened,) presented a splendid appearance, being, as usual, covered with glowing lava from the top to the bottom. Sir Walter was luckily so situated, that he could view the whole striking scene from the port-hole of his berth, while lying in bed. In two days afterwards, that is to say, on the 17th December, he arrived in the Bay of Naples, where, as recently coming from a port afflicted with the dreaded cholera, the vessel was instantly ordered to perform a nine days' quarantine. This unlooked-for penance was endured with characteristic nautical philosophy by the crew; and Scott, who had greater cause for grumbling than any of them, from his younger son Charles being in the town, as an attaché of the official representative of Britain, was the only one who maintained his usual equanimity. An officer of the *Barham* wrote us that "Sir Walter, whose patience and contentment under all sorts of circumstances were imperturbable, was the only one amongst us that bore his fate with perfect serenity and even cheerfulness." But time is an universal remedy for all human distresses. They were permitted to land on the 27th, and the parting between the crew and their precious freight is described to us as singularly affecting. The rough cheeks of most of the veteran man-of-war's men were even moist with tears,—so strong was the influence of this remarkable man in winning the regard and admiration of all who came within the sphere of his society.

Now reinstated, as it were, in the bosom of his family, our author's health and spirits improved so much that he prolonged his stay at Naples till April, receiving in the meanwhile, all the attentions from the natives, as well as the British and other foreign residents, which enthusiastic admiration for his genius could suggest. On the 12th of January he was introduced at court, on which occasion, from some freak of fancy, he chose to appear in the splendid dress of the Scottish archers—the hereditary body-guard of the princes of Scotland—which the natives, in their simplicity, mistook for a field-marshal's uniform; and much marveling was there amongst them at their previous ignorance of his high rank in the army! Every mark of honour and respect was shown him by the royal family, and King Francis gave directions for the executing of whatever excavations he might wish to make among the ruins of

Pompeii. With the exception of short excursions of curiosity and recreation, however, he still continued to dedicate all his leisure time to writing; and it is worthy of remark, that the last published production of his pen—the long and interesting preface to the second edition of “Castle Dangerous,” with many corrections and antiquarian notes on the text,—was prepared and forwarded by him from Naples in February of this year. In April, the travellers proceeded to Rome, where they arrived on the 21st. There they abode for nearly a month, and it was not a little curious, that during all this time, Scott did not pay a single visit to the Vatican, although he inspected all the other curiosities both in Rome and the surrounding country, with great attention,—more especially the residence of Cardinal York, during his latter days, situated at Frasoli, a small village about twelve miles from Rome, where he testified great anxiety to glean every particular respecting that individual. From Rome, it was intended by the party to return by the Rhine, passing through the states of Germany, and visiting Vienna, Prague, Toplitz, Carlsbad, Munich, and the other principal towns and cities of that empire. Probably one inducement to fix on this route was the prospect of visiting the venerable Goethe, who, whilst Scott was residing at Naples, sent a pressing invitation to that effect, through a common friend. “Assure him,” said the kind-hearted old man, “that he will not fail to find himself in every respect at home under our roof, and meet with the respect and attention which are due to him, not only as the author of a host of important works, but *as a right thinker and a man of exalted mind, who has devoted his life to the improvement of mankind.* And, as concerns myself, I may truly remark, that this feeling is greatly enhanced by the kindred connection which has subsisted between us for many a long year.”

It is needless now to speculate upon the interest which must have attached to this—the first—meeting, between the two greatest geniuses of the age, for alas! it was doomed never to take place. The first news that awaited Scott, on reaching Rome, was the intelligence of the death of his great brother bard, which took place scarcely a month after the date (10th March) of the above letter. We cannot affirm that the occurrence of this event had a pernicious effect on his precarious but seemingly improving condition, but certain it is, that from this time his health rapidly declined, and his impatience to proceed homewards hourly increased. The party set out accordingly in the beginning of May, and so continued and feverish was the anxiety of the invalid to hasten on, that his companions conceived there was more danger in thwarting his wishes than even in journeying with the exhausting haste at which he insisted on proceeding. It is said that for six days continuously they traveled at the rate of seventeen hours per day—a fatigue which would

have tried the strongest constitution to endure. They rested a day or two at Frankfort, and it was here, perhaps, that the last of those unintentional testimonies to his universal fame was offered to him, while he retained the consciousness of enjoying them. He walked into the warehouse of the celebrated bibliopole Jagel, with the view of obtaining sketches of some of the more striking scenes he had lately passed, and which his haste had prevented him from examining carefully in person. After exhibiting some views of the scenery in Switzerland, the bookseller naturally passed to those of Scotland, and, without being aware of his customer's identity, pointed out ostentatiously—a *view of Abbotsford!* Scott smiled sadly, and merely observing that he “had already a faithful picture of that spot,” (meaning doubtless in his own heart,) walked off with his other purchases without discovering himself. From that hour, he traveled almost unremittingly till he got embarked on the Rhine. It was hoped that the comparative ease of this mode of journeying would prove favourable to him, but his impatience seemed even to increase from the absence of excitation attendant on a land conveyance, and on the 4th of June he was struck insensible by a shock of his fatal malady, which would undoubtedly have proved immediately fatal, but for the presence of mind of a faithful servant who opened a vein and bled him profusely. Every consideration now rendered his friends as anxious as himself to accelerate his return to Britain with all the speed his situation admitted; and in eight days after his last alarming attack, he was deposited in the St. James' Hotel, Jermyn street, London. Here he was instantly attended by Dr. Holland and Sir Henry Hallford, but all remedial measures were found to be unavailing. For some weeks he remained almost totally unconscious—unaware of the presence even of his son and daughters, although sometimes a smile of intelligence and recognition would lighten up his features. At such times his transient gleams of recollection uniformly terminated in faltering forth, “*Abbotsford—Abbotsford!*” and it was therefore by the unanimous advice of his medical attendants that, as soon as it was possible to remove him without risk, their patient was conveyed to Blackwall and put on board a steam-vessel for his native shore. He was quite sensible at this crisis, and while he was swung on board, made gestures of acknowledgment and thankfulness for the repeated and reverent “*God bless you, Sir Walter,*” which proceeded from the crowd of anxious spectators. This was on the 7th of July, and on the 9th he arrived at Newhaven, whence he was immediately conveyed to Douglas's Hotel in St. Andrew square, Edinburgh. Here he remained two nights and a day, when he was supposed capable of being removed to Abbotsford. He was accordingly lifted out of the hotel and placed in an easy carriage, at which time he showed perfect consciousness of his situation. He shook hands

with his medical attendant, Dr. Watson, who had accompanied him from London, thanked him for all his kind attentions, and also noticed two or three other friends, though by gestures rather than words. But his mind evidently continued on the stretch of expectation during his ride homewards, and when he reached a point whence he thought he might catch the first glimpse of Abbotsford, his impatience to sit up and look around for it became almost irrepressible. He at length arrived at the beloved spot, but his previous excitement subsided into complete apathy and unconsciousness to every thing that was passing around him, nor did he recognise any one, until his old friend and factor, Mr. Laidlaw, appeared at his bedside, whom he warmly shook by the hand, murmuring that "now he knew he was at Abbotsford." After some hours rest he revived, and had himself borne alternately into his library and other apartments of his house, and even out to his garden, now blooming in all the rich hues and fruitfulness of summer, and seemed delighted with all around him. He continued in this happy mood for several days, and even improved so much in his intellectual faculties, as to express a wish for passages from various authors being read to him. And here we consider it incumbent on us to mention, no less as illustrative of the predilections of our immortal author, than as a duty to the merits and memory of one of the greatest of England's poets—one, whose writings although now, by the lamentable perversion of fashionable taste, permitted to be "overcrowded" by the thousand tinsel versifiers, who get pay and patronage through the united influence of cantering stanzas, hot-pressed paper, gilt edging and binding, together with unconscionable impudence—will yet survive, and be read, and admired by posterity, to the eternal shame of the present generation, who seem altogether dead to their merits:—we mean the venerable Crabbe,—we reckon it, we say, due to the memory of both these great men to mention, that it was the fine moral poems of the author of "Phœbe Dawson"—the tale which is said to have soothed and interested the last intelligent moments of Charles Fox—that Scott uniformly desired should be read to him, *alternately with his bible*.

But the gathering cloud settled gradually down, and in a few days the great mind, that, as Byron says, had "rained and lightened" over the universe so long, at last became motionless and insensate. Yet neither the fibres of body nor mind—both so long firm-strung with exercise, ceased their functions without a struggle. Strong delirium and raving succeeded the healthy operations of the one, and mortification those of the other; and from day to day did this deadly contest last, until exhausted nature sunk, and after about fourteen days of total insensibility, Sir Walter Scott expired at half past one o'clock, afternoon, on the 21st of September, 1832. He was aged exactly sixty-one years, one month and six days.

The intelligence of Scott's death, long expected as it was, passed like the voice of a tempest over Britain, subduing and hushing to silence every sound save of itself. The nation felt—

"A mighty spirit was eclipsed—a power  
Had passed from day to darkness—to whose hour  
Of light no likeness is bequeath'd—no name,  
Focus at once of all the rays of Fame!"

The greater portion of the public prints, on announcing his death, clothed their columns in mourning: in several of the sea ports, the vessels lowered their colours half-mast high,—in short, there were all the popular demonstrations of *real* grief, usually displayed in courtesy upon the demise of a royal personage. The interment took place on the 26th, and seldom has a scene been witnessed more strikingly solemn: not from the splendid funeral trappings, nor even the long train of the titled, gifted, and wealthy, who swelled the crowd of mourners; but from the aspect of profound grief that was spread over every countenance throughout the district. At Selkirk, and in the villages of Darnick and Melrose, all business was suspended, and the signs of the traders in the line of the procession towards Dryburgh Abbey\* were almost all covered with black cloth. In passing through Melrose, the whole male population, uncovered, and dressed in deep mourning, were found drawn up in lines on each side of the market-place, while the bell of the church tolled sadly forth the grief that pervaded all hearts. There was scarcely a rood of ground on the long road to Dryburgh, that had not been rendered famous by the magic pen of the deceased, and all seemed to feel it: the husbandman left his labour in the field, and stood reverently by the wayside; and the old and infirm were carried to the doors of their cottages, to take a farewell look of all that was left of their great chronicler and benefactor. Even Nature herself seemed to sympathise in the general sorrow. The sky was hung with

\* This beautiful ruin is situated in the parish of Merton, in the upper part of Berwickshire, and was founded in the reign of David I. "It originally belonged," says Mr. Chambers, "to the Halyburtons of Merton, an ancient and respectable baronial family, of which Sir Walter's paternal grandmother was a member. It is composed simply of the area comprehended by four pillars, in one of the aisles of the ruined building. From the limited dimensions of the place, the body of the author of *Waverley* has been placed in a direction north and south, instead of the usual fashion; and thus, in death at least, he has resembled the Cameronians, of whose character he was supposed to have given such an unfavourable picture in one of his tales." The place of sepulture allotted to Scott's family was gifted to them by the late proprietor, the eccentric Earl of Buchan. There are only the remains, however, of Sir Walter's uncle, Robert, his own and those of Lady Scott, laid in this romantic cemetery.

dusky clouds, and not a breath of air was stirring, as if to illustrate the truth of the great man's own words.

"Call it not vain : they do not err  
Who say that when the Poet dies  
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,  
And celebrates his obsequies."

About night-fall, the funeral train, which was nearly a mile in length, reached the precincts of the peaceful groves of Dryburgh, where the coffin was taken from the hearse, and the mourners arranged themselves in the following order :

*Head.*

Major Sir WALTER SCOTT, eldest son of the deceased.

*Right.*

Charles Scott, Esq. second son.  
Charles Scott, Esq. of Nesbitt, cousin.  
William Scott, Esq. of Raeburn, cousin.  
Colonel Russell, of Ashiesteel, cousin.

THE BODY.

*Left.*

J. G. Lockhart, Esq. son-in-law.  
James Scott, Esq. of Nesbitt, cousin.  
Robert Rutherford, Esq. W. S. cousin.  
Hugh Scott, Esq. of Harden.

*Foot.*

William Keith, Esq. of Edinburgh.

In this order, with the rest of the mourners following in a double line, at the head of whom was the Rev. J. Williams, Rector of the Edinburgh Academy, dressed in full canonicals as a clergyman of the church of England, the party moved forwards towards the abbey. On arriving there, the coffin was set down on trestles placed near the grave, and the funeral service was solemnly read by Mr. Williams, amid a stillness the most profound, unless when broken by a stifled sob from a bereaved relative or early friend. The last rites were at length completed, and the group of three hundred mourners separated without interchanging a word or even gesture of friendly salutation, each moving away singly, slowly, and in silence.

As usual—the grave had scarcely closed over the remains of this great man, when the prying and restless curiosity of the world began to

show itself. The most preposterous statements were spread abroad respecting the magnitude of his debts, which were set down by one at 50,000*l.*, another at 70,000*l.*, and a third (we have the document before us) at upwards of 100,000*l.*! The truth was, that upon a statement of Scott's affairs being drawn up, it was found that only a comparative trifle remained to be made up. The real amount of outstanding debt was about 53,000*l.*; and to meet this were the 22,000*l.*, from insurance offices, and between 10,000*l.* and 11,000*l.* accumulated in the hands of the trustees, arising from the profits of his literary labours and other accessory sources; so that little more than 20,000*l.*, exclusive, however, of the accumulated interest, remained unrealised. On the 29th October, a meeting of the creditors was called, when an offer was made by Scott's family of the whole of the latter sum against the ensuing February, and that for this a discharge should be granted. The meeting was very numerous attended, and the proposal was adopted without a dissentient voice. In addition to the resolution accepting the offer, and directing the trustees to see the same carried into effect, the following was moved and carried with a like unanimity:—

“And while the meeting state their anxious wish that every creditor who is not present may adopt the same resolution, they think it a tribute justly due to the memory of Sir Walter Scott, to express, in the strongest manner, their deep sense of his most honourable conduct, and of the unparalleled benefits which they have derived from the extraordinary exertion of his unrivalled talents under misfortunes and difficulties which would have paralysed the exertions of any one else, but in him only further proved the greatness of mind which enabled him to rise superior to them.”

It is thus seen, that Scott, almost by his own unaided labours, had, in the course of five years, almost accomplished the great aim of his heart—to “pay his creditors every farthing.” The amount ranked against him in 1826 was liquidated; the interest of the capital only was undischarged, but as that was passed from by his creditors, and in fact is seldom expected in affairs of bankruptcy, he may be considered as having “squared accounts” with the world. When we look back on all the circumstances of this case, how noble, how unparalleled, does the conduct of Sir Walter Scott appear! It is no reflection against others to say, that his innate sense of honour presents a singular contrast to the custom of the world, and that he voluntarily took on himself a burden which almost all others have shown themselves eager to shake off, and have done so without incurring the slightest censure. Cynics will say, perhaps, he only did his duty: perhaps so,—but the melancholy accompaniment to this comment is, *that he killed himself in the struggle.*

When Scott's will was examined, it was found that he had perfectly



understood the state of his circumstances, and had provided, in his own mind at least, for all exigencies. It was drawn up by himself, and is dated 4th February, 1831. It enumerates all his various debts, the half of which were then discharged, and the means he calculated on for realising the remainder. He first directs his executors (his two sons and Mr. Lockhart) to sell his moveable property at Abbotsford (given back in 1830 by his creditors, as a present) to his eldest son, at 5000*l.*, of which sum, 2000*l.* to be given to Mr. Charles Scott, as much to Miss Anne Scott, and the remaining thousand to Mrs. Lockhart, in order to make up her portion (with a like sum given at her marriage) to the same amount as the rest of the junior branches of his family. He then directs that the future profits of the work entitled "*Tales of a Grandfather*," and certain articles inserted in the *Annals*, all of which were lately written for his own immediate comfort and subsistence, be applied to discharge his debts incurred since the execution of the trust, the surplus, if any, to go to the trust. He next enumerates the means which he principally depended on for the payment of all his other debts. First, the new edition of his novels, or rather his share in the profits of that edition; then the similar edition (now almost completed in twelve volumes) of his poems. In the event of these being sufficient to discharge the debts under the trust, the further profits to go towards the redemption of the heritable bond of 10,000*l.*, contracted upon the estate of Abbotsford for the support of Archibald Constable and Company; the still further profits, if any, to be divided among his family. "And if it be thought necessary," the document thus proceeds, "that any biographical sketch of the author himself be drawn up, to be attached to the said collection, I do request and intreat my affectionate son-in-law, the said John Gibson Lockhart, who has, during all his connection with me, shown me the duty and kindness of a son, to draw up such sketch, using in that matter such letters, correspondence, and diaries, as shall be found in my repositories; and I also request the said John Gibson Lockhart to carry on and conclude the publication of my poetical works as above mentioned, if I shall leave them incomplete, for behoof of the said trust, and also, for the same purpose, to correct and cut down the *Life of Bonaparte* to a less size, which may be done with a prospect of considerable advantage, or to suggest some competent person to do so; and in general I name the said John Gibson Lockhart my literary executor, assigning my son the said Charles Scott as his assistant, to spare his time as much as possible;"—a recompense, he adds, being rendered to them, either by the trust, or by the assignees under this deed.

Had Scott lived to the present time, he would have had the gratification of not only paying off the interest as well as capital of his debts, but of finding a gradual fortune accumulating to him, without the ne-

cessity of lifting his pen. As it is, there is much pleasure in thinking, that those he loved so well will partly enjoy the benefit of his labours.

The public sentiment elicited by the death of Sir Walter Scott, did equal credit to his country and to human nature. On Friday, the 6th of October, a large meeting of noblemen and gentlemen was held in Edinburgh, in the Assembly Rooms, George street, for the purpose of "doing honour to the memory of Sir Walter Scott, and of taking measures for the erection of some lasting monument of the gratitude and perishable esteem of his fellow-countrymen." At this meeting were congregated individuals of the most opposite political opinions, at a time when political difference was at the very highest; but every thing was sunk in the immediate object of their assembling. It was happily arranged that this fact should go forth to the world in as strong a light as possible. The youthful Duke of Buccleuch, the weight of whose influence was strenuously given to the tory party, proposed the first resolution, signifying that "the meeting was impressed with sentiments of the highest admiration of the genius and talents of the late Sir Walter Scott, whose matchless works have carried his fame into the remotest regions of the civilized world, and have reflected on the literature of his country a glory which seems destined to be as durable as the language in which they are written,"—which was seconded by the Earl of Roseberry, one of the most staunch supporters of the whig ministry. The second resolution, to the effect that the meeting, "in accordance with what they believe to be the general wish and hope of his countrymen, are of opinion that a public memorial should be erected in the metropolis of Scotland to the memory of Sir Walter Scott, on a scale worthy of his great name, and fitted to convey to future times an adequate testimony of the estimation in which he was held by his cotemporaries," was proposed by Lord Advocate Jeffrey, ex-editor of the *Edinburgh Review*; and was seconded by his avowed political opponent, Professor Wilson. Their speeches were as worthy of their illustrious talents, as of the occasion which called them forth. At the close of the meeting the subscriptions amounted to 1100*l.*, and this from twenty-four subscribers. Amongst the most remarkable of these substantial tributes to Scott's genius, was that of 100*l.* from Mr. Murray of the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, who thus acknowledged the obligation the establishment owed to the illustrious deceased, by the publication of the novels. To this fund, his majesty, King William, immediately afterwards subscribed 300*l.*: the Queen of Spain sent 20*l.*; in short, contributions poured in from all quarters. At the same time meetings for the like purpose were held in almost every city, burgh, and village in Scotland; some to contribute to the central fund at Edinburgh,—others to erect local testimonials of admiration for the deceased. In America, and other foreign

countries, similar meetings took place, and 200*l.* were soon transmitted by the poor Canadians. In London, a great association was formed for a more generous purpose, namely, to preserve the estate of Abbotsford to Scott's family in perpetuity, by paying off all the incumbrances upon it. This proposition was also taken up in other quarters, and for a while carried on with great spirit.\*

The result of these subscriptions shows the fleeting nature of popular enthusiasm. The amount collected towards the monument at Edinburgh, has, we understand, reached about 6000*l.*, and from the apparent apathy of the public, as well as of those entrusted with the management of the fund, there seems little prospect of the amount being increased, unless by the accumulation of interest. Of this, however, there is every likelihood; and, some twenty or thirty years hence, probably, the British public may be awakened to a sense of their neglect, by some anonymous correspondent of a newspaper, asking what had become of the guinea he had contributed for raising a monument to the memory of Sir Walter Scott, in 1832? Such is the way these matters are generally managed in Edinburgh.† But it is to be hoped, for the sake of our country's honour, that the scandal may in this instance be averted. We trust the British public will not continue to be diverted from the immediate completion of this great object, by paltering accounts of the wavering of committees between the choice of an obelisk or a cenotaph,—a group or a bust. We will not presume to dictate to the public taste in such a question, but we say, that sufficient funds are procured to raise a noble monument of *some description*, and that it

\* In noticing these subscriptions, we cannot help adverting to one circumstance which must prove a source of lasting regret to all who may hereafter visit the shrine of Abbotsford: namely, that the manuscripts of the novels are not preserved amongst its archives. The greatest part of these interesting documents became, of course, the property of the assignees of Messrs. Constable and Company, to whom the trustees for the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, offered 1000*l.* for them; but this sum was rejected. The MSS. were afterwards offered to the British Museum, the trustees of which refused to give the price asked; and after repeated attempts to find a private purchaser, they were at last brought to *public sale*, in the beginning of 1832, by Mr. Evans, Pall-Mall, and disposed of to various purchasers for little more than 300*l.*! "Rob Roy" brought the highest price, 50*l.*; the "Antiquary," and "Peveril of the Peak," 42*l.* each; "Old Mortality," 33*l.*; "Guy Mannering," 27*l.* 10*s.*; "Monastery," 18*l.* 18*s.*; "Waverley," 18*l.*; "Kenilworth," 17*l.*; "Fortunes of Nigel," 16*l.* 16*s.*; "Bride of Lammermoor," 14*l.* 14*s.*; "Abbot," 14*l.*; and "Ivanhoe," and "The Pirate," 12*l.* each! The fate of those documents is said to have caused Scott excessive vexation.

† Witness that strange affair on the Calton Hill, said to be a monument to Burns, which has stood unfinished for years for the want of a few pounds to get the surrounding space cleared and enclosed!

concerns the credit of every man in Scotland, that their capital should no longer be without some memorial of the greatest man that ever was within its walls.

Respecting what is called the "Abbotsford Subscription," we understand that enough has been collected to pay off the 10,000*l.* bond, which, we presume, will be forthwith done. It is pleasing to think that by this means, and the accumulating profits of the new editions of the works, the property will not only be preserved in the family, but its future possessors fully enabled to sustain the rank becoming the heir of one of the proudest names which Scotland ever boasted.\*

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Our task is now ended; for we have given, in the course of our Memoir, such ample matter illustrative of the character of its subject, in whatever point of view it can be regarded, that any retrospective summary here would be matter of supererogation. That Sir Walter Scott was the most wonderful man of his age, has long been universally allowed. That he was also one of the *best* of men, we trust we have sufficiently shown. If we have, in any part, failed to satisfy the expectation of our readers, we hope it will also be remembered, that our task has been that of exhibiting the character and career of a man, to do full justice to whose genius and merits would require a capacity as unbounded, and a pen as felicitous as his own.

\* The surviving children of Sir Walter Scott are,—Sir Walter Scott, major of the 15th hussars; Mrs. Lockhart; and Mr. Charles Scott, of the Foreign Office, now an attaché of an embassy to Madrid. Miss Anne Scott, who, from the time of her father's death, received from the royal purse a pension of 200*l.* a-year, died at Mr. Lockhart's house in London, of brain fever, on the 24th of May, 1833.

THE END.

## WORKS OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

The following list, showing the amount of the literary labours of Sir Walter Scott, forms a suitable supplement to his life. We insert it here as a document for reference which many will be glad to preserve.

### WORKS OF SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

| POEMS.       |                                         |       |                      |                                                                                          |       |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------|-------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Published in |                                         | Vols. | Published in         |                                                                                          | Vols. |
| 1802-3       | Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border       | 3     | 1824                 | St. Ronan's Well                                                                         | 3     |
| 1804         | Sir Tristrem                            | 1     | 1824                 | Redgauntlet                                                                              | 3     |
| 1805         | Lay of the Last Minstrel                | 1     | 1825                 | Tales of the Crusaders                                                                   | 4     |
| 1806         | Marmion                                 | 1     | 1826                 | Woodstock                                                                                | 3     |
| 1809         | The Lady of the Lake                    | 1     | 1827                 | Chronicles of the Canongate                                                              | 2     |
| 1811         | Don Roderick                            | 1     | 1828                 | Fair Maid of Perth                                                                       | 3     |
| 1813         | Rokeby                                  | 1     | 1829                 | Anne of Geirstein                                                                        | 3     |
| 1814         | The Lord of the Isles                   | 1     | 1831                 | Count Robert of Paris. Castle Dangerous                                                  | 4     |
| 1814         | The Bridal of Triorman                  | 1     |                      | My Aunt Margaret's Mirror. The Tapestry Chamber. The Laird's Jock. In Keepsake for 1828. |       |
| 1816         | Harold the Dauntless                    | 1     |                      |                                                                                          |       |
| 1822         | Dramas, and other Poems                 | 2     |                      |                                                                                          |       |
|              |                                         | 14    |                      |                                                                                          | 75    |
| NOVELS.      |                                         |       | MISCELLANEOUS WORKS. |                                                                                          |       |
| 1814         | Waverley                                | 3     | 1808                 | Life of Dryden                                                                           | 1     |
| 1815         | Guy Mannering                           | 3     | 1814                 | Border Antiquities                                                                       | 2     |
| 1816         | The Antiquary                           | 3     | 1814                 | Life of Swift                                                                            | 1     |
| 1816         | Black Dwarf. Old Mortality              | 4     | 1815                 | Paul's Letters                                                                           | 1     |
| 1818         | Rob Roy                                 | 3     | 1819                 | Provincial Antiquities                                                                   | 2     |
| 1818         | The Heart of Mid-Lothian                | 4     | 1827                 | Life of Napoleon Bonaparte                                                               | 9     |
| 1819         | Bride of Lammermoor. Legend of Montrose | 4     | 1828                 | Discourses                                                                               | 1     |
| 1820         | Ivanhoe                                 | 3     | 1828-31              | Tales of a Grandfather                                                                   | 12    |
| 1820         | The Monastery                           | 3     | 1830                 | History of Scotland                                                                      | 2     |
| 1820         | The Abbot                               | 3     | 1830                 | Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft                                                     | 1     |
| 1821         | Kenilworth                              | 3     |                      | Lives of the Novelists, &c. Contributions to Periodicals, &c.*                           | 10    |
| 1822         | The Pirate                              | 3     |                      |                                                                                          | 42    |
| 1823         | The Fortunes of Nigel                   | 3     |                      |                                                                                          |       |
| 1823         | Peveril of the Peak                     | 4     |                      |                                                                                          |       |
| 1823         | Quentin Durward                         | 3     |                      |                                                                                          |       |

The result of the above enumeration, therefore, gives a return of 131 volumes of original writing from the pen of Sir Walter Scott, exclusive of his immense range of correspondence, notes, and prefaces to the late edition of his novels, &c. In the uniform edition of the works, now in the course of publication, the whole will form a series of eighty-four volumes, as follows:—

|                      |    |
|----------------------|----|
| Poems                | 12 |
| Novels               | 48 |
| Miscellaneous works, | 24 |
| In all               | 84 |

This, however, does not include the whole of the *original* writings. From the "miscellaneous," will be excluded the "History of Scotland," "Letters on Demonology," "Provincial and Border Antiquities," contributions to the "Edinburgh Annual Register," &c. &c., the copyrights of which compositions are in the hands of various parties. Were these included in the present series, we believe the whole would fall little, if at all, short of one hundred volumes.

\* The original extent of these it is impossible, from their scattered condition, through the Reviews and Encyclopædias, &c., to state definitely, but the present estimate cannot be reckoned an exaggerated one.





















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